

# THE WAY TO NIBBANA

## A Collection of Articles on Ultimate Peace

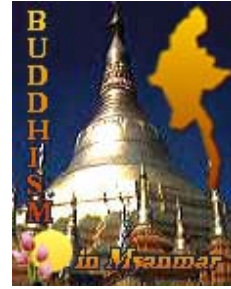
- Venerable U Thittila: The Way to Nibbana
- Venerable Mingun Sayadaw: Nibbana
- Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw: What is Nibbana?
- Sayadaw U Panna Dipa: Nibbana
- Sayadaw U Panna Dipa: Nibbana: The Supreme Goal of Buddhism
- Sayadaw U Panna Dipa: Buddhist Way of Emancipation
- Venerable Pyinnyathiha: What is Nibbana?
- Venerable Dhammasami: Nibbana (Nirvana)
- Dr. Mehm Tin Mon: Nibbana
- U Han Htay: Nibbana for All
- U Khin MOUNG: Two Stages of Nibbana
- U Shwe Zan Aung: A Dialouge on Nibbana
- U Htay Hlaing: The Buddha Country or Universe
- (Multiple Sources) Vipassana Nanas



## **THE WAY TO NIBBANA**

**Venerable U Thitilla**

**( Aggamahapandita )**



### ***Lecture to the High Court Buddhist Association, Rangoon***

#### **Part One**

The title of our talk this afternoon is 'The Way to Nibbana the way to the highest happiness'.

To sum up all the teachings of the Buddha. we have a stanza:

To refrain from all evil

To do what is good.

To purify the mind

This is the teaching of (all) Buddhas.

(Dhammapada 183; - *Khuddakanikaya Dhammapadatthakatha*. 14  
Buddhavagga. 4-Anandatherapanha vatthu; Verse 183.)

It is a very short stanza; yet it covers all the teachings of the Buddha. It embodies three stages on the Highway to the Highest Happiness *Nibbana*. I think most of you know that stanza in Pali and therefore I need not repeat it. There are three stages of developing ourselves towards this Highest Happiness. The order of development of ourselves in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path (*Attha Magganga-Majjhima Patipada*) is classified into three groups, namely. *Sila* (Morality), *Samadhi* (Concentration) and *Panna* (Wisdom). The first two steps of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Understanding. i.e. understanding of the nature of self, and the nature of the universe, and Right Thought are grouped under *Panna* Wisdom; the next three, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are grouped under *Sila*. Morality. Right Effort. Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are grouped under *Samadhi* (Concentration).

You may ask, as it has frequently been asked - Why three stages - why not one stage only as a basis? The reason is, we have three stages of defilements - *Kilesas*, (impurities) such as *Lobha*, *Dosa* and *Moha*, etc. Each of the 10 *Kilesas* (defilements) has three stages. For instance, greed or anger has three stages. The first stage, the root, is called in *Pali*, *Anusaya*. At this stage the defilements such as craving, anger, etc. are lying latent in each of us. They do not become manifest up to the level of thoughts, feelings and emotions, yet they lie latent in each of us. We can prove it. The fact that we can be made excited and angry shows that we have certain tendencies like anger, hatred - though for ordinary purposes we may be called 'good' people. We are good only when other people are good; otherwise we can be made angry and emotional. This proves that we have certain tendencies.

If one's actions are according to the law of Morality, then that is Right Action. When your action not only is harmless but also helpful - of great service to you as well as to others, then you can say your action is right. There are many things which we think to be good but they are only good to us, good only from our own standpoint.

In order to do right your mind must be free from selfishness, ill-will, hatred, jealousy, etc. When your mind is pure you can see and know things as they really are. Take for instance the case of a pot which is filled with water. It is filled in three stages - the bottom, the middle and the topmost parts. *Anusaya* is the first or the root stage where the evil tendencies are lying latent. The fact that you can provoke a person into anger clearly shows that there is anger, or the root of anger, lying latent within him. This first stage is very quiet - so quiet that we seem to be sacrosanct.

Even at the second stage - *Pariyutthana*, we are still in the realm of thoughts, feelings. The English saying 'Silence is Golden' is not always right. We may say that mere silence is sometimes far more dangerous than a big noise.

Then in the final stage we become fierce, dreadful, uncontrollable both in words as well as in actions. (*Vitikkama*). That is the top part of our defilements. So *Anusaya*, *Pariyutthana* and *Vitikkama* - these are the three stages of defilements.

Buddhism teaches a method of how to control, how to overcome these evil tendencies lying latent in us. To exercise this control we need three stages of training towards development - *Sila*, *Samadhi*, and *Panna* - Morality, Concentration, Insight.

First comes *Sila*. Morality, the observance of precepts. The observance of precepts would enable one to overcome only the last stage -

the outward, visible stage of defilements and not the other two stages. It is like cutting a tree by the branches at the top. Morality can control only your words and actions, not your mind. It can only make us good ladies and gentlemen in the worldly' wise sense and not make us righteous people - don't you say' some times, when you are in the process of observing the Eight Precepts, 'When I am out of this observance, you will know what I am'? It is necessary for us to have three stages and the first is Morality to dispel the outward or visible stage of defilements that is in us.

But as there remain two stages undisputed by morality, the defilements that we have got rid of will grow up again, and that very soon. Therefore, we need the second stage of training - *Samadhi* (Concentration or meditation) in order to enable us to dispel the second stage of defilements left undisputed by the practice of *Samadhi* - Morality. Concentration is mind-control and mental culture. It is like cutting a tree by the trunk, but as there remains the first or root stage undisputed the defilements will rise up again. But Concentration can clear away' the defilements for a considerable time so that they will not rise again so soon. Clearing away of defilements by Morality - *Sila* is called *Tadanga Pahana* in *Pali* (temporary suppression of defilements). Just like the temporary cutting away of the topmost branches of a tree. Putting away of defilements by means of *Samadhi* (concentration) is called *Vikkhambhana Pahana*. Concentration represents a more powerful and a higher mental culture, so it is far more effective than *Sila*.

Coming to the third stage of development. *Panna* (Wisdom):

By means of developing one's insight, Wisdom, one is able to dispel the first stage - the *Anusaya* stage. It is like cutting a tree by the root so that it will never grow again. If defilements are cut by means of Wisdom, such defilements will never rise again. This is called *Samuccheda Panna*.

As these three stages are interdependent and interrelated. *Sila*, *Samadhi* and *Panna* should be practised at the same time and not separately. Only to put them in order in the *Dhamma* we put down three stages separately, but in practice we must practise them simultaneously. While trying to practise Concentration it is easier for you to live rightly' and understand things rightly. In the same way, practice of right understanding or insight enables one to live rightly and concentrate rightly. This applies not only during periods of meditation but in one's daily life as well.

We should be rational beings. We should react to surroundings, circumstances and events of daily life reasonably and not instinctively or emotionally.

What we need in this world is to be rational - to try to exercise our reasoning powers - but it is rather bad for the world that in most cases human beings judge according to their emotions or instincts.

The standard of mental development is very low because the method of public education is wrong, the method of upbringing of the children is also wrong. I can prove how wrong it is. Even the nursery rhymes taught to the infants portray stories full of cruelty and killings without an atom of love in them. Again, a group of moralists in the West went round the educational institutions in order to test the psychology of the children studying there. A child was asked to make a sentence comprising the words 'Mother', 'Baby' and 'Cat'. The child answered, 'The cat scratches the baby and the baby cries. Mummy gets angry and beats the cat'. The same question was asked in every school in the whole province and there was only one child who gave the following answer and was given a prize as it contained some love and affection that should exist between the different beings on earth. 'The cat plays with the baby. Mummy is so pleased with the cat that she gives some milk to the cat to drink'.

I myself witnessed a woman who bought a cane from a seller and gave it to her little boy to play with. The boy instead beat her with it. Many parents do not train their children to be good, tame and docile, but encourage them to be cruel, quarrelsome and aggressive by giving them toy revolvers, toy swords and air rifles. So the method of training children in the present, scientific world is very wrong. In cinemas most of the pictures shown are all wrong - they encourage shooting and the telling of lies.

What then is the Buddha's method? First, morality. These rules of morality are firstly explained in the *Panca-sila*: Not to kill, not to steal, not to have sexual misconduct, not to tell lies and not to take any intoxicating liquors and drugs. In Burma most people think that all is well if you observe these five precepts only negatively. To merely abstain from killing is not good enough; so we should emphasize the positive aspect of the principle of non-killing - to have compassion on all beings including animals.

In the Discourse on *Metta* we said *Adosa* is the negative aspect of it. but having *Adosa* is not all. In the practice of *Metta* you have pity, compassion and loving-kindness towards all beings in the whole universe. So also in the case of practising the Five Precepts. Non-killing is understood by many as not taking life, but this term 'not to kill' is broad enough to include all kind and loving acts.

The second precept - taking what is not given to you freely. The standard of mental development in the present world - even of adults - seems to be much lower than an intelligent child of twelve. It seems that

modern man, because of his physical body, cannot be styled as an animal, but by actions many people nowadays behave worse than animals. The positive aspect of this second precept of *Panca-sila* is not only to refrain from stealing but to offer material help. Then we do not need to have a big police force or courts to try criminal cases or a Bureau of Special Investigation.

Then comes 'sexual misconduct'.

Then the next precept '*Musavada* - to abstain from telling lies is very difficult to observe. Not to tell lies is the negative aspect. The positive aspect is not only to tell the truth but to use such words as are soothing, kindly and comforting to the people who hear them. As for telling lies, if the majority of our race do not tell lies, even these law courts might not be necessary.

As for the last of the five precepts - not to take intoxicating liquors and drugs - this has almost become an everyday habit taken at every meal in civilized society. Really, no drinking of any liquor is necessary to keep one healthy mentally, morally and spiritually. Once in England my audience argued that since I have not taken any liquor in my life, since I am complete teetotaller, I cannot know the benefits derived from drinking. Drinking makes you lose control of your mind at least temporarily, and those who drink to excess can be said to become quite mad. Taking liquor is against the law of nature and also the precept laid down by the Buddha. Drink causes distraction, dullness of mind. When done to excess you can become a stark lunatic. According to Buddhism, drink is the cause of all misery, all troubles. By taking drinks you become emotional and it is easy for any drunkard to tell lies or to commit murder, etc.

To conclude, I would like to ask the audience and the Sayadaws as well as the *Upasakas* and *Upasikas* to emphasize the positive aspects of these five precepts, the *Panca-sila*. I would like to mention also that the Buddha's way of life is a system of cultivating ourselves - our higher consciousness. It is a way of a good, righteous and happy life. The Buddha says that when a good act is performed several times there is a definite tendency to repeat this act. So in time it becomes a habit. Men are creatures of habit. By habit they become slaves of drink, slaves of gambling, slaves of lust and scores of other vices. Also I would like to quote a Japanese proverb, 'Man takes drink first, then the drink takes a drink and finally drink takes the man'.

Any physical action, if repeated for sometime becomes a habit. In the same way, any thought which is allowed to rise up again and again gives rise to a definite tendency to reproduce that type of thought and therefore becomes a habit. The Buddha's method is to use the reproductive power of

the mind as well as the body for the development of ourselves. By cultivating good habits of mind and body we develop ourselves fully. It is called *Parami* in *Pali*. meaning fulfilment. In other words, to make counter habits whenever you have a tendency to be angry, and then you can develop mental states of loving-kindness and compassion so that these mental states will be repeated again and again. And in the end they will become habits so much so that you will never entertain thoughts of hatred, anger, jealousy and the like. These evil tendencies will disappear before the tendencies of loving-kindness, even as the darkness of the night fades away before the dawn of the rising sun. This is the method given by the Buddha. It is a practical system of changing and developing our inner selves.

## Part Two

It is a continuation of our discussion on the three stages of mental development. They are: *Sila* (conduct), *Samadhi* (concentration) and *Panna* (wisdom). We dealt with the first stage at the last lecture. This time I am going to deal briefly with concentration (*Samadhi*) which is meditation and also wisdom. These are rather serious, because when we come to practise concentration we usually find that it is a dull process. Meditation is not to be talked about, but to do, to practise. You are not willing to do things normally. To talk about things is very easy. To organize things is very easy. Some people think it needs a genius to organize; but to do is far more difficult even than to organize.

This afternoon I am going to read from the book that I have written on the subject of concentration and how to go about meditation.

## CONCENTRATION (*SAMADHI*)

The spiritual man, having been equipped with morality and mastery of the senses, is inclined to develop higher and more lasting happiness (i.e. than worldly happiness) by concentration (*samadhi*) control and culture of the mind, the second stage on the path to Nibbana.

Concentration is mental culture without which we cannot attain Wisdom. By concentration we can acquire happiness - a happiness which is much higher than ordinary worldly happiness. Worldly happiness is dependent. It needs the support and co-operation of a partner. Higher mental happiness does not require any external help or any partner. This happiness can be attained through *Jhanas*. *Jhana* (Skr. dhyana) is derived from the root *Jhe*, to think closely of an object or to burn adverse things, *nivarana*, hindrances to spiritual progress. *Jhana* has been translated as trance, absorption or ecstasy, but it is a special ultramundane experience.

In Burma we do not talk about *jhana*. We talk very much about

*Vipassana. Samatha* (meditation: calm) or *jhana*, is not thought much of in Burma because the Burmans think that it is not the highest but only the second stage to Nibbana. That is one reason. Another reason is that those who are interested in *Vipassana* meditation think that it is a short cut to Nibbana. In some cases, it is thought that it is a matter of days or a few weeks' practice for one to attain Nibbana. They like to go to Nibbana straightaway without waiting for a long time. They' have three day courses, seven day courses for it. To attain *jhana* you have to prove it by performing a miracle - walk on water, sit on water, raise the dead. But to attain Nibbana in the stage of Sotapanna needs no proof. That is still another reason why people are interested in *Vipassana*.

he Buddha himself was highly qualified in the *jhanas*. I would like to say something about these *jhanas*. Some people suggest that if we are going to spread Buddhism effectively throughout the world, we must do something different from what we have done now. By *Jhana* you are able to fly up in the sky. You can appear and disappear in the air. So, some people say that Buddhism can be spread far quicker than otherwise if we can prove Buddhism through the *Jhanas*. Any way, these *Jhanas* are a part of the Buddha's teaching. *Jhana* means to think, to concentrate on the object to overcome Hindrances. *Jhana* also means to burn the adverse things, *nivarana*, Hindrances to spiritual progress. From this same derivative we have 'Jhar-pa-na' in the case of death, decay (funeral). *Jhana* has been translated as trance, absorption or ecstasy, but it is a kind of spiritual experience, ultra-mundane experience.

The spiritual man selects one of the forty objects enumerated in the *Visuddhi-magga*. The object which he selects should appeal most to his temperament. such as emotion, anger and so on. Those forty objects are divided into six groups, according to the types of temperament of the people. So if you are going to practise concentration, meditation, for the attainment of *Jhana* you will have to choose one of the objects suitable for your temperament.

The method is fully explained in the *Visuddhi-magga*. This object is called *Parikammanimitta*, preliminary object. He concentrates on this object for some time, may be some days. weeks, months, some years, until he is able to visualize the object without any difficulty. When he is able to visualize the object without looking at it. he is to continue concentration on this visualized object, *Uggahanimita*, until he develops it into a conceptualized object, *Patibhaganimitta*. At this stage the experienced spiritual man is said to be in possession of proximate concentration, *Upacara-samadhi*, and to have overcome temporarily the five Hindrances (*nivarana*), namely, sensual desire, hatred, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubts.



To illustrate what we have said. If you are going to take our *Pathavikasina* (device of earth) as your object, you get hold of a circle made of clay which is called *Kasina*. In English it is translated as a hypnotic circle which is not very correct. So you get a circle of clay about one span and four fingers. You can make it as smooth as possible and paint it with the colour of the dawn. This circle is placed before you about two and a half cubits away. Some people do this practice even in the West at present. In India it was done long ago and therefore it is very common. The people in the West try to practise it just to see if it works. By this practice some have acquired a very strong power of concentration. So you prepare that circle, place it in front of you at a convenient distance so that you can look at it at your ease. While looking at it you must keep your head, neck, and back erect. The purpose is to keep your mind with the circle. Ordinarily, without concentration you do not know where your mind is. Any way you try to concentrate on it, on this physical object, *Parikammanimitta*. As explained in the book, it may take day after day, month after month, year after year, until you are able to visualize it without the physical object.

The Buddha advised us not to take anything too seriously. You must not strain your mental faculty. You must consider yourself as if you are at play, enjoying it with a cheerful mind just as some young people enjoy witnessing a cinema show. At the same time the Buddha advised us not to keep our minds in a very light spirit. You do it for the sake of helping other people, to add your happiness to the happiness of others. Taken in this spirit, even the sweeping of the floor can become interesting. So also in meditation you must think of it as if you are at play so that it becomes interesting, because it is a good thing to do, a necessary thing to do. Unless we clear our minds like this we can never practise the first stages of the *Dhamma*, let alone attain Nibbana, the highest goal in Buddhism.

So you concentrate on this physical object until you can visualize it without the object. This visualization in Pa!i is called *Uggahani mitta*. It is the exact replica of the object seen. When you come to this stage you do not require the physical object. Then continue your concentration on the visualized object. The difference between the first object and the second object is the first being physical and the other mental. But it is exactly the, same object. You carry on concentrating until this object becomes bright, shining like a star. The difference between the second and the third stages is that in the second you see the object with certain defects, but in the third stage there is no defect whatsoever. It is like a shining star. It is called *Patibhaganimitta*, conceptualized object. At this stage the experienced spiritual man is said to be in possession of promixate concentration, *Upacara-samadhi* and to have overcome temporarily the five Hindrances (*nivarana*); namely, sensual desires, hatred, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubts.

His concentration gradually becomes so enhanced that he is about to attain *jhana*. At this stage he is said to be in possession of *Appana Samadhi*. He eventually attains the five stages of *jhana* step by step, and it is when he reaches the fifth stage of *jhana* that he can easily develop the five supernormal powers (*Abhinna* - Celestial Eye (*Dibbacakkhu*), Celestial Ear (*Dibbasota*), reminiscence of past births (*Pubbenivasanussati-Nana*), reading thoughts of others (*Paracitta-vijanana*) and various physic powers (*iddhi vidha*). By these powers you can see things which the naked eye is not capable of seeing - no matter how far the objects are, there is no barrier which can prevent you from seeing them. You can see through mountains, you can see long, long distances without any obstructions in between. Even today there are Yogis in India who possess these supernormal powers, for this *Jhana* practice is not necessarily confined to Buddhism, Hindus also practise it. In Buddhism the practice of *Jhana* is a great help toward the attainment of *Nibbana*. Those who have reached such high a level of experience as *jhana*s have their minds highly refined and it is easier for them to attain the *lokuttara* stages of development, yet they are not entirely free from all evil tendencies - the reason is that concentration, as has been stated above, can overcome only the second stage of defilements temporarily. As there remains the first stage untouched, undispelled, the passions which have been inhibited by concentration would arise again.

The five supernormal powers (*Abhinna*) are sometimes called occult, or hidden, or secret power in English. In Buddhism they cannot be called occult powers because these powers are for every one to possess, if they practise hard enough.

Morality makes a man gentle in his words and deeds, concentration controls the mind, makes him calm, serene and steady. Wisdom or Insight (*Panna*), the third and final stage, enables him to overcome all the defilements completely. As a tree which is destroyed by the root will never grow, even so the defilements which are annihilated by Wisdom (*Panna*) will never rise again.

The spiritual man who has reached the third stage of the path to *Nibbana* tries to understand the real nature of his self and that of the things of the world in general. With his highly purified mind he begins to realize that there is no ego-principle or persistent identity of a self in either internal or external phenomena. He perceives that both mind and matter which constitute his personality are in a state of constant flux, and that all conditioned things are impermanent (*Anicca*), subject to suffering (*Dukkha*), and void of self-existence (*Anatta*). To him then comes the knowledge that every form of worldly pleasure is only a prelude to pain, and that everything that is in a state of flux cannot be the source of real,

permanent happiness.

The aspirant then concentrates on the three characteristics of existence, namely, transiency (*Anicca*), suffering (*Dukkha*), and being void of ego or self-existence (*Anatta*). Having neither attachment nor aversion for any worldly things, he intensely keeps on developing insight into both internal and external phenomena until he eliminates three fetters, namely, Self-illusion (*Sakkaya ditthi*), Doubts (*Vicikiccha*) and Clinging to vain rites and rituals (*Silabbata paramasa*). It is only when he destroys completely these three fetters that he realizes *Nibbana*, his ultimate goal for the first time in his existence. At this stage he is called a *Sotapanna*, one who has entered the stream, the Path that leads to *Nibbana*. The Buddha has described this stage as follows:

- More than any earthly power,
- More than all the joys of heaven:
- More than rule over all the world.
- Is the entrance to the Stream.(Dhammapada, Verse 178)

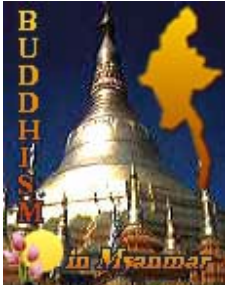
Symbolically one who has reached the first *Aryan* stage is said to have entered the stream, because just as the water of a river never comes backwards towards its source, but flows steadily and inevitably towards the ocean, so, rapidly and with certainty, the aspirant will attain his final enlightenment. As, however, he has not eradicated the remaining seven fetters, he may be reborn seven times at the most.

When the aspirant develops deeper insight and weakens two more fetters, namely, Sensual Craving (*Kamaraga*) and Ill-will (*Patigha*), he becomes a *Sakadagami*, Once-Returner. He is so called because he is reborn in the world of desires (*Kamaloka*) only once if he does not obtain final release in this present life,

The third stage is that of *Anagami*, Non-returner, who completely discards the above two fetters. He will not be reborn in this world or any of the realms of sense-pleasure, but he, if he does not attain his final enlightenment in this life, will be at death reborn in one of the higher, suitable planes, and from thence pass into *Nibbana*.

The fourth stage is that of *Arahat*, perfected saint, who completely annihilates the remaining five fetters, namely, Craving for existence in the world of form (*Rupa-raga*), Craving for existence in the immaterial world (*Arupa-raga*), Pride and Conceit (*Mana*), Restlessness (*Uddhacca*) and Ignorance (*Avijja*). He then realizes that rebirth is exhausted, the holy life is fulfilled and what was to be done has been done. This is the highest, holiest peace. The *Arahat* stands on heights more than celestial realizing the unutterable bliss of *Nibbana*.

# NIBBANA

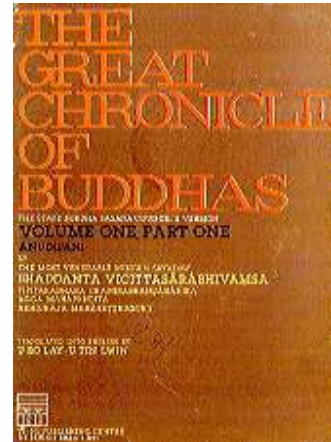


THE MOST VENERABLE  
MINGUN SAYADAW

"The Great Chronicle of  
Buddhas"

(Translated by Professors U Ko  
Lay and U Tin Lwin)

Vol. 1, Part 1, Page 272-275, 1991



What is *Nibbana*, the cessation of suffering? When the Unconditioned Element *Asankhata—Dhatu*, the unique Ultimate Reality, which has the characteristics of peace, is realised with the fourfold knowledge of the Path, all the defilements numbering one thousand and five hundred, are completely eradicated, never will they rise again. In any existence when the *Arahattamagga* is attained, the suffering in the form of the five aggregates ceases once and for all immediately after death, just as a heap of fire has been extinguished. There is no more rebirth in any realms of existence. That Unconditioned Element, the unique Ultimate Reality, which has the characteristics of peace and all the unique attributes described above is called *Nibbana*.

The worldlings do not know full well the nature of *Nibbana* as the Noble Ones do. If they, without knowing it, say or write to let others understand it as the Noble Ones do, they could go wrong. Let alone speaking of *Nibbana*, when they speak even of a mundane object which they know only from books, as though they have seen it with their own eyes, they are likely to make mistakes. The common worldling, not being able to see every aspect of it like the Noble Ones do, should speak of *Nibbana* only in the aforesaid manner.

When *Nibbana* is considered as to what it is like those who have not understood what it really is, are likely to regard *Nibbana* as a kind of indestructible country or city. When *Nibbana* is mentioned as a secure city in a discourse at a water-pouring ceremony, it is just a figurative usage. *Nibbana* is not a city, nor is it a country. Yet there are some who believe and say that *Nibbana* is a city where those who have passed into it live happily with mind and body free of old age, sickness and death. The truth is that passing of Buddha., Pacceka-Buddhas and Arahats into *Nibbana* means complete cessation of the five aggregates, material and mental, of an arahat at his death in his last existence; they will no longer appear in any realm of existence. (*Nibbana* is the Ultimate Reality which is the object of the Path and Fruition. *Parinibbana* is complete cessation of the material and mental aggregates which will never come into being again.) Their passing into *Nibbana* is not going into the city of *Nibbana*. There is no such thing as the city of *Nibbana*.

The Myanmar word ( **Nibban**) is a Pali derivative. When people perform meritorious deeds, their, teachers will admonish them to pray for *Nibbana*. Though they do so accordingly, they generally do not know well what *Nibbana* means. So they are not very enthusiastic about it.. The teachers therefore should ask them to pray for the extinction of all suffering and sorrow because the words are pure Myanmar and the devotees will understand thoroughly and pray enthusiastically and seriously.

### Two kinds of Nibbana

Suppose there is a very costly garment. When its owner is still alive you say, "it is an excellent garment with a user. When he dies, you say, "It is an excellent garment with no user." (The same garment is spoken of in accordance with the time in which he lives or in which he no longer lives.) Similarly, the Unconditioned Element, the Ultimate Reality of *Nibbana*, which has the characteristic of peace and which is the object the Venerable Ones such as Sariputta contemplate by means of the Path and Fruition is called *Sa-upadisesa Nibbana* (*Nibbana* with the five aggregates of *upadisesa* contemplating) it before his death; after his death, however, since there are no longer the five aggregates that contemplate *Nibbana*, it is called *Anupadisesa Nibbana* (*Nibbana* without the five aggregates of *Upadisesa* contemplating it.)

The peace of *Nibbana* is aspired for only when it is pondered after overcoming craving by wisdom. That the peace of *Nibbana* is something which should really be aspired for will not be understood if craving is foremost in one's thinking and not overcome by wisdom.

### Three kinds of Nibbana

*Nibbana* is also of three kinds according to its attributes which are clearly manifest in it: (1) *Sunnata Nibbana*, (2) *Animitta Nibbana* and (3) *Appanahita Nibbana*.

(1) The first attribute is that *Nibbana* is devoid of all distractions (*palibodha*); hence *Sunnata Nibbana*. (*Sunnata* means 'void'.)

(2) The second attribute is that it is devoid of consciousness (*citta*) mental concomitants (*cetasika*) and matter (*rupa*) which as conditioned things are the cause of defilements. Conditioned things, whether mental or material, cannot only arise individually and without combining with one another. Material things arise only when at least eight of them form a combination. (That is why they are called *atthakalapa*, unit of eight.) Mental things also arise only when at least eight elements, make a combination. (By this is meant *panca-vinnana*, the fivefold consciousness.) When such combinations of mental and material components brought together to form an aggregate are wrongly taken to be my self, my body, a thing of substance, they give rise to mental defilements such as craving etc. Conditioned things are thus known as *nimitta*, ground or cause. In particular mundane consciousness, mental concomitants and matter are called *nimitta*. In *Nibbana*, however, there are no such things of substance as "myself", "my body", which cause the

emergence of defilements. Hence the name *Animitta Nibbana*.

(3) The third attribute is that *Nibbana* is devoid of craving which is *tanha*. As has been said before, *Nibbana* has nothing to crave for. *Nibbana* is not to be craved. Therefore it is also called *Appanihita Nibbana*. In this way there are three kinds of *Nibbana* according to its attributes.

This Truth of Cessation of Suffering is in short called the Truth of Cessation. This Truth of Cessation is the Unconditioned (*Asankhata*) Element. (It is not conditioned by any factor.) Therefore this Truth of Cessation, the Unconditioned Element, the Ultimate Reality of *Nibbana*, is named *Appaccaya - Dhamma*, Uncaused Phenomenon, or *AsankhataDhamma*, Unconditioned Phenomenon, in the *Dhammasangani*.

## WHAT IS NIBBANA?

[By Mahasi Sayadaw](#)

*(From 'Nibbanapatisamyutta Katha' or 'On the Nature of Nibbana', 1995)*

Nibbana means extinction or annihilation. What is extinguished or annihilated? The round of suffering in the realm of defilement (*kilesa vatta*), of action (*kamma vatta*) and of result of action (*vipaka vatta*) is extinguished or annihilated. The realm of defilement encompasses *avijja*, ignorance, *tanha*, craving, and *upadana*, clinging or attachment. The realm of action includes both meritorious and demeritorious deeds that contribute to emergence of the endless round of rebirths. The realm of the result of action, usually called *kamma* result, relates to the consequences of actions, good or bad. Every action produces a resultant of mind, matter, six sense-bases, feeling etc. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking are all manifestations of the result of action or *vipaka*.

Failure to grasp at insight-knowledge which recognizes the real nature of existence when a man sees or hears something is ignorance. When he declares that he sees or hears something, he does so with the wrong notion that it is actually his ego that sees or hears. But in fact, there is no ego. This wrong notion deludes one into believing that things are permanent or pleasing or satisfactory. It, therefore, gives rise to craving, which, as it intensifies, develop into clinging. This is how defilement builds up its own empire.

As soon as clinging to sense-objects develops, efforts must at once be made to satisfy the desire for those sense-objects. The volitional activities or *sankhara* would start operating. In the present context they may be called *kamma*-formations, for they are responsible for forming or shaping actions. When, as a result of such formations, death takes place in the course of existence, it is inevitably followed by rebirth, for *patisandhicitta*, rebirth-linking consciousness, arises soon after *cuticitta*, death-consciousness. Death is followed by becoming. In other words, a new life begins. This, it may be said, is a resultant (*vipaka*) of *kamma* formations which again and again bring forth consciousness, mind, matter, six sense-bases, contract, feeling, etc.

Dependent, therefore, on *vipaka vatta*, there arises *kilesa vatta*; and dependent on *kilesa vatta*, there arises *kamma vatta*. The revolution of these three *vattas* is incessant throughout the endless round of existence. It is only when insight-knowledge is applied to the practice of noting the phenomena of arising and passing away of the aggregates that Path-consciousness develops and Nibbana is brought near. At this stage, ignorance, with its faithful attendant, defilement, is annihilated. In the absence of defilement, no fresh actions or *kammas* can be formed. Any residual *kamma* that happens to exist after the annihilation of defilement will be rendered inoperative or ineffective. For a Worthy One, ¶ Arahata, no new life is formed after his death-consciousness. There is now a complete severance of the cord of existence which signifies annihilation in sight of Nibbana.

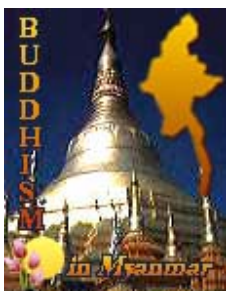
Hence, the definition of Nibbana runs thus:

*Nibbati vattamdukkham etthati nibbanam; nibbati vattarndukkhham etasmim adhigateti va nibbanam.*

In Nibbana, the round of suffering comes to a peaceful end. Hence cessation of suffering is Nibbana. In other words, when the Path of an Arahata is reached, the round of suffering ceases.

Nibbana is, therefore, peace established with the annihilation of suffering. For the sake of brevity, please note only this -- Nibbana is synonymous with absolute peace. Annihilation brings about complete elimination of rounds of defilement, of action and of result of action. The Commentaries say that the state of peaceful coolness or *santi* is a characteristic of Nibbana. When coolness occurs the ambers of suffering are extinguished. But what is to be noted with diligence is the complete annihilation of the three rounds of defilement, action and result of action which all go to create mind, matter, volitional activities, etc.

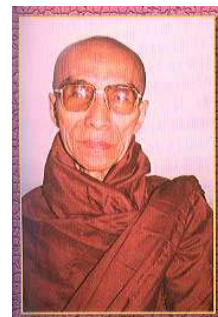
In *Ratana Sutta*, annihilation is described as quenching the flames. "*Nibbanti dhira yathayam padipo,*" runs the relevant verse in Pali. With men of wisdom like Arahats, all becoming is extinguished in the same manner as light is put out. Their old *kammas* or actions having come to exhaustion, no new *kammas* which create new becoming can arise. The flame of existence is thus put out.



## "NIBBANA"

by

Sayadaw U PANNA DIPA  
Kaba Aye Sayadaw



World Buddhist Meditation Institute, Yangon

The word "*Nibbana*" is very frequently and extensively used by all Buddhists because *Nibbana* is the ultimate goal in Buddhism. Whenever a Buddhist performs any meritorious deed, he strenuously aspires to *Nibbana* alone. But actually neither by uttering

words nor by praying can *Nibbana* be attained.

Though one can write and express the word "*Nibbana*", yet the real meaning or sense of it cannot be realized until one has attained it by oneself. *Nibbana* is not a thing or an object that one can have, nor a place where one can reach, nor a sense object that one can feel, nor a happiness that one can enjoy in the worldly sense, but the most supreme and pure state of insight (*Nana*) which surpasses all mundane conditions.

According to the exposition of the Buddhist canonical Texts, *Nibbana* is a Pali word which is composed of two constituents, namely *Ni* and *vana*. *Ni* is negative particle and *vana* means craving and it therefore means the absence of craving: In other words, craving (*Tanha*) functions as a link between one life and another; but the release or absence of craving is the disconnection of chains of life-process in *Samsara*.

In Sanskrit, *Nibbana* is written as "*Nirvana*" which is derived from the root "Va" meaning "to blow" and the prefix "*Nir*" meaning "out"; therefore *Nibbana* means "to blow out", that is to blow out the flame of one's craving.

The *Nibbanic* state is not a negative concept like nothingness, but positive. From a negative outlook, naturally we often come across pairs of opposites, such as, black and white, darkness and light, short and long; sorrow and happiness; so also life continuum (*Samsara*) and *Nibbana* also can be considered in a similar way. As *Samsara* here means birth, old age, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain, and despair, *Nibbana* therefore means absence of birth, absence of old age, absence of old disease, absence of death, absence of sorrow, absence of lamentation, absence of grief, absence of pain, absence of despair and on the whole, absence of all suffering of life.

Again from the positive standpoint, *Nibbana* is characterized as the Ultimate Liberation, Happiness and Peace. According to *Abhidhamma* (higher Doctrine), there are two kinds of happiness, (1) happiness enjoyed by senses and (2) happiness attained and experienced in insight or supreme wisdom.

Regarding the former, the happiness cannot be enjoyed unless there is a sense object which is to be sought after. Therefore a sense object is a happiness in the worldly sense, and no sense object means unhappiness. For this reason, the happiness enjoyed by the sense is only temporary and imaginary.

But in the case of the latter, the characteristic of *Nibbana* is supreme peace transcending sense experience (*Santi lakkhana*), the essence of indestructibility (*Accuta rasa*), and the discernment in the disciple's attainment which is devoid of any sign of form or shape or colour etc. (*Animittapaccupathana*)

So the *Nibbanic* state is devoid of everything like the four great elements, existence, static entity, rebirth, death, consciousness, mind and matter (*Nama & Rupa*) and so on. It has only the phenomenal nature of ceasing or, extenuation of Mind and Matter




which is always grasping the desirable sense objects.

Actually, *Nibbana*, in its true nature is single (*Ekameva Nibbana*), but it can be attained by a twofold way, namely, (1) *Saupadisesa Nibbana* the attainment of *Nibbana* while still in life and (2) *Anupadisesa Nibbana* =the attainment of *Nibbana* at the moment of death. Again *Nibbana* can also be treated from three aspects, namely (1) *Sunnata* - devoid of the existence of an Ego or Soul, (2) *Animitta* - devoid of sign of: permanent or shape form and (3) *Apanihita* -devoid of desire or craving.

*Nibbana* therefore, being. non-conditioned by any phenomenon is a spaceless timeless and encased state devoid of substance. In reality, *Nibbana* does not exist in any particular place, but it is attained only by going beyond the conditioned state. Therefore one might say that the *Nibbanic* state lies within the latent potentiality of everyone who actually searches for it.

The word "*Nibbana*" is very essential in the Texts of the Buddha's Teaching and is used in many different Ways. For example: (1) *Sacca* - the state of precise Truth, (2) *Mokkha* - The state of Liberation from defilements. (3) *Siva* - The state of Ultimate Peace and (4) *Sukha* - The, state of Happiness because of the release from the dangers of *Samsara*.

<p><b>NIBBANA</b> <b>THE SUPREME GOAL OF BUDDHISM</b></p> <p><b><u>Venerable Kaba-Aye Sayadaw U Pannadipa</u></b> <b>PRESIDENT</b> <b>WORLD BUDDHIST MEDITATION INSTITUTE</b> <b>KABA-AYE, RANGOON, BURMA</b></p> <p>09-05-2001</p>	
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## **PREFACE**

Each human being, In his nature is always struggling and discovering the truth of life, that is, to obtain genuine peace and real happiness and release from pains. He is sure to experience some times as good and other times as bad. Normally men cannot be exempt from the continuing sufferings of life, such as old age, disease, death, sorrow, grief, lamentation, despair, and so on. When man comes to discern these sufferings In their real nature, he by no means can stand aside without searching for the true light of happiness.

The Bodhisatta, in his birth as the ascetic, Sumedha contemplated thus:

"Even as, although Misery is,  
Yet Happiness Is also found,  
So, though indeed Existence is,  
Non-Existence should be sought."

"Even as, although there may be Heat,  
Yet grateful Cold is also found,  
So, though the threefold Fire exists,  
Likewise Nibbana should be sought."

When I am subject to  
Birth, Old Age, Disease,  
So then I will search for the Supreme Peace  
Free from Old Age and Death."

So considering the actual nature of suffering, one should know about Nibbana, the ultimate cessation of all sufferings. As such, I am here enjoining in a compassionate delight to impart my knowledge of the noble Dhamma on the subject of Nibbana for the welfare of those who wish to know about Nibbana.

May you be able to attain Nibbana In this present life!

Kaba-Aye Sayadaw

U Panna Dipa

## **NIBBANA** **THE SUPREME GOAL OF BUDDHISM**

The term "Nibbana" is very frequently and popularly used by all Buddhists in religious matters, for Nibbana is their ultimate aspiration of the supreme goal. Therefore, whenever they perform any meritorious deed, they ardently aspire to attain Nibbana, saying that "*Idam me punnam asavakkhaya vham hotu*"; *Idam me punnam nibbanassa paccayo hotu*," meaning is "May I be able to attain the extinction of defiled outflows (Nibbana) by this meritorious deed: May my meritorious deed be the cause of attaining Nibbana.

Actually, neither by uttering words nor by praying can One ever attain Nibbana. We can write down the word "Nibbana", yet the real meaning or sense of it cannot be realized until and unless we have attained it. Nibbana is not, a thing that wordings can express in their conventional language. It is the purest state of insight and it surpasses anything that is mundane.

The Buddhas and Arahats who have attained Nibbana are able to explain it comprehensively, as far as the language allows. For a worldling (Puthujjana) it is extremely difficult to know the real state of Nibbana, to say nothing of explaining it in words or by any similes.

Through my studies of the Texts and practice of meditation, I have some theoretical and practical knowledge of Nibbana, but this knowledge will be quite insufficient in comparison to that of the Arahats. Yet, I shall try to bring out the nature of Nibbana as far as I can by presenting before you some definitions of Nibbana.

Nibbana is a Pali word which is composed of two constituents, namely, 'Ni' and 'Vana': 'Ni' is a negative particle and 'Vana' craving. Their combination in the word Nibbana comes to mean "the absence of craving". In Pali Texts it is therefore said "*Vana sankhataya tanhaya nikkhantatta nibbananti*" which, when translated into English, means, "Nibbana is a release from that craving which functions as a link to connect one life with another".

In Sanskrit, Nibbana is written as "Nirvana" which is derived from the root "Va" - 'to blow' and the prefix "nir" meaning 'out' "Nirvana" It therefore means 'to blow out', that is to blow out the flame of one's craving In order to understand Nibbana. there are two kinds of happiness, namely, (1) happiness enjoyed by the senses; and (2) happiness attained and experienced in insight or supreme wisdom. Regarding the former, the happiness cannot be enjoyed by our senses unless there is a sense object which is to be felt or enjoyed. It is so-called a happiness in the worldly sense, but just a temporary or imaginary feeling'. In the case of the latter, the supramundane happiness experienced in the Path, Fruition and Nibbana is the most supreme peace, transcending sense experience (Santilakkhana), the essence of indestructibility or immortality, (Accuti rasa) and the discernment in one's attainment which is devoid of any sign or form or shape (Animitta paccupatthana)

So the Nibbanic state is totally devoid of any and every thing of the four elements, personal existence, static entity, rebirth, death, consciousness or mind and matter etc. It is only the state of element (Dhatu) which means "Nisatta nijjiva" non-being, non-soul, i.e. there is not even a purified soul in Nibbana. It is the happiest state or the ultimate peaceful bliss of emancipation which utterly eliminates all passions that cause prolong unrest in Samsaric existence.

Here, I would like to explain to you how the Buddha Himself and His disciples have experienced the real happiness of Nibbana. After the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment in Nibbana with the realization of the Noble Truths, the Buddha's mind was emancipated as the glorious consummation of His long course of practice, and experiencing the Bliss of Emancipation (Vimutti sukha), He made the solemn joyful utterances:

"How sweet is solitude of the peaceful one, of him who has seen and perceived the Truth.

Happy to be without malice and to be kind to all;

Happy is the passion free, Happy is he who has no desire;

To have removed the notion "I am", that is the Supreme Bliss." (Udana).

The Buddha, after the realization of the Truth of Nibbana, teaches it to beings who are perfect to attain it (Buddho bodhaya dhammam deseti). And thus His disciples who attained the Happiness of Nibbana during the tenure of their life revealed it out with joyful utterances as follows:

"Nibbana have I realized, and gazed into the mirror of the Dhamma, the Noble Truth.

I am healed of my wound;

Down is my burden laid; My task is done;

My heart is utterly set free."

"Nibbana taught by the All-Enlightened One is indeed supremely happy;

No sorrow, no dust of defilements and perfect security; There sufferings cease." (Thera G)

Actually, Nibbana in its true nature is single (Ekameva Nibbanam), but it can be treated in a two-fold way, namely, (Kilesa parinibbana) the extinction of all impure passions and it is also called (Saupadisesa Nibbana), i.e., attainment of Nibbana still with life. For instance, the Arahat during his life experiences the Peaceful Bliss of Nibbana with perception and feeling while attending to his duties for the happiness of others, or he

will be in the entire ecstasy of Nibbana nullifying feeling and perception in Nirodhasamapatti, complete cessation of his mental flow. When the Arahant dies his Nibbana is Khandha parinibbana i.e. attaining Nibbana with the dissolution of the aggregate of mind-matter, or Anupadisesa, i.e. Nibbana without life-substratum.

Thus Nibbana is only one as Asankhatadhatu, Unformed Element: it is twofold as Saupadisesa and Anupadisesa: threefold according to the three entrances,

Vimokkha mukha) that is one of the three contemplation, impermanence, suffering, and insubstantiality (Anicca), (Dukkha) and (Anatta). It is four-fold in accordance with the four Paths, and is five-fold with reference to the elimination of the five-fold attachment to the five senses, and is six-fold as it is attained by extinction of the six-fold craving pertaining to the six sense objects.

It is the question of what happens to the Arahant at death that has given rise to much discussion. At the death of an Arahant all his physical and mental aggregate cease together with all attributes relating to phenomenal existence. Hence the Arahant's death is called Khandhaparinibbana the extinction of aggregates in the Asankhata-dhatu, unborn, unformed purified Element, and it is the release from Sankhata, that which is born and formed. Referring to this the Buddha said:

"Monks, there is an unborn, unmade, unoriginated, and unformed. Were there not such a state there would be no escape from that which is born, made, originated and formed. Since, Monks, there is this state of the unborn . . . there is an escape from the born, made, originated and formed." (Udana 80).

It is to find out and to proclaim this unborn state that the Bodhisatta endeavored to attain enlightenment. "It is for the sake of attaining the unconditioned state of Nibbana that the religious life in the Buddha is lived," and this was the reply of that great Arahant Punna to the question of the Great Arahant Sariputta, the Captain of the Faith, who questioned about the purpose of living holy life in the Buddha.

The argument depends upon such expressions as "extinction" or "blown out as a lamp," which are frequent in the scriptures as is seen in the following:

"The old craving exhausted, the fresh craving rises,

Freed from thought of future becoming

They like seeds barren do not spring again,

But are blown out just as a lamp. (Sn. ver. 235).

Some may venture to ask: "Whether the Arahant exists after death, or does not exist, or whether he is both existence and non-existence". The Buddha has answered this kind of topsy-turvy arguments by noble silence, knowing that they may not tend to any profit, but

to more confusion.

There is neither an existent, nor non-existent object, called Nibbana, which we have to enter for the attainment of Immortality. If there were a phenomenal object called Nibbana then it must have been subject to destruction and none could have attained the eternal and immutable state called Nibbana or Immortality. On the other hand, Nibbana cannot be explained as being the annihilation of the individual and the world, for if we judge by the standard of the absolute truth (Paramattha) , we find that the self and the world are mere illusions in so far as they get no existence apart from our consciousness.

Nibbana is not existence, hardly can it be non-existence. It lies totally beyond both existence and non-existence. Existence and non-existence are both conditional and relative to each other. Nibbana which is "Absolute" cannot be designated as being either existence or non-existence: Nibbana which is incomprehensible and profound can only be realized by those who have attained it and have thus passed beyond both limitations, existence and non-existence.

"But where does this Nibbana exist?" was the question raised by King Milinda. The Venerable Nagasena replied: "There is no place looking in the East, the West, the South, the North, above, below or beyond, where Nibbana is situated. Yet, there is Nibbana, for he who is pure in virtue and possesses right Insight, realizes it, whether he is in Greece, Alexandria, Kosala or in China:" (M11. pp. 323-26).

Just as the fire is not stored up in a particular place but rises when the necessary conditions are present, so Nibbana is not said to exist in a particular place, but it is attained when and wherever the necessary qualities are fulfilled. Nibbana, therefore, is not a heavenly place like the Hebrew Paradise, or the Christian Heaven, or the Hindu Brahma."

When the deity Rehitassa asked, "Where does the world's end exist?" The Buddha said: "It is in this one fathomed body with consciousness that I declare the existence of the world, its origin, its cessation, the path leading to its cessation." Thus Nibbana does not exist apart from ourselves and it is to be realized by ourselves.

Let us turn to our friends of the Mahayana School to see what they think about this Asankhatadhatu. Nagarjuna who was supposed to be a saint and the founder of the Madhyamika School explained Nibbana as "Sunnyata" Voidness, condemning all the degrees of "Realism of the Sarvasti-vadins and asserting the mayavic nature of existence. He denied the existence of the self and the world, and proclaimed the essential oneness of Samsara and Nibbana. According to his view Nibbana is to be attained by the grace of Amitabha, and cannot be attained by self effort, for there is no "Self" to effort. In the Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa Thera says: The Third truth, the Cessation of Suffering, i.e. Nibbana is void of Atta, Self or Soul, but is full of the essence of durability, goodness, and blissfulness, and its essential characteristic is "Santi " peace. This shows how he has opposed the idea of Sunnyata of Nagarjuna.

The Sarvasti-vadins discriminating between Samsaric manifestation and the essence of

pure Dhammas or elements, assent that Asankhatadhatu, Nibbana is an entity but without consciousness or rebirth.

In the Theravada Canon there are references to assert that Nibbana is the consciousness liberated from all worldly objects and thoughts, as is stated in the Dighanikaya. "Nibbanam-Vinnanam anidassanam anantam sabbato pabbam" - Nibbana is the consciousness that has no sign perceptible to the senses and it is immeasurable, purest and a state wherein all the connection with elements cease, leaving no trace (assesam uparujjhati). (D.i. 223).

Regarding one's existence in Samsara and the deliverance from it, the Buddha said the following salient facts:—

"Inconceivable is the beginning of this Samsara, not to be discovered a first beginning of beings, who, obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving, are hurrying and hastening through this round of rebirths."

"And thus have you long time undergone suffering, undergone torment, undergone misfortune and filled the graveyards full, verily, long enough to be dissatisfied with all forms of existence, long enough to turn away and free yourself from them all."

"Be it in the past, present or future: whosoever of the monks or priests regards the delightful and pleasurable things in the world as impermanent (anicca), miserable (dukkha), without an ego (anatta), as a disease and sorrow, it is he who overcomes craving.

"And released from Sensual Craving, released from the Craving for Existence, and released from the Craving for Non-Existence, he does not return, does not enter again into existence."

"For through the total fading away and extinction of "Craving"(tanha), "Clinging to Existence" (upadana) is extinguished: through the extinction of the clinging to existence, the "Process of Becoming" (bhava) is extinguished: through the extinction of the "Process of Becoming," (Action) Rebirth (jati) is extinguished, through the extinction of rebirth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are extinguished. Thus comes about the extinction of this whole mass of suffering."

"Hence the annihilation, cessation and overcoming of bodily form, feeling, perception, karma-formations and consciousness: this is the extinction of suffering, the end of disease, the overcoming of old age or death."

"And for a disciple thus freed, in whose heart dwells peace, there is nothing to be added to what has been done, and naught more remains for him to do. Just as a rock of one solid mass remains unshaken by the wind, even so neither forms, nor sounds, nor odors, nor tastes, nor contacts of any kind, neither the desired nor the undesired, can cause such a

one to waver. Steadfast is his mind, gained is deliverance."

"Verily, there is a realm where there is neither the solid, nor the liquid; neither heat, nor motion; neither this world, nor any other world; neither sun, or moon.

"This I call neither arising, nor passing away, neither standing still, nor being born, nor dying. There is neither foothold, nor development, nor any basis. This is the end of suffering."

"The learned and noble disciple, however, who has regard for Holy men, knows the teaching of Holy men, is well trained. In the noble doctrine, he understands what is worthy of consideration, and what is unworthy of consideration. And knowing this, he considers the worthy and not the unworthy. What Suffering is, he wisely considers. What the origin of Suffering is, he wisely considers. What the Extinction of Suffering is, he wisely considers. What the Path that leads to the Extinction of Suffering is, he wisely considers."

"And by considering thus, three fetters vanish namely: "Self-illusion, Scepticism and Attachment to mere Rule and Ritual."

"And those disciples in whom these three fetters have vanished, they all have "entered the Stream" (sotapanna), have forever escaped the states of woe, and are assured of final enlightenment."

"More than any earthly power,  
More than all the joys of heaven,  
More than rule o'er all the world,  
Is the Entrance to the Stream."

"And verily, those who are filled with unshaken faith towards the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, all those have entered "the stream."

"However, through the fading away of delusion, through the arising of wisdom, through the extinction of craving, no future rebirth takes place again."

"For, the actions which are not done out of greed, anger and delusion, which have not sprung from them, which have not their source and origin there: such actions are, through the absence of greed, anger and delusion, abandoned, rooted out, like a palm tree torn out of the soil, destroyed, and not liable to spring up again."

"In this respect one may say of me, that I teach annihilation, that I propound my doctrine for the purpose of annihilation, and that I herein train my disciples. For certainly, I teach annihilation, the annihilation of greed, anger, and delusion, as well as of the



manifold evil and demeritorious things."

"One may, through the "Cessation of Passion" come to know for oneself, even in this life, the stainless deliverance of the mind, the deliverance through wisdom."

If someone puts the question. "Who, made the Five Khandhas, or five groups of existence," he seldom gets a right answer. Now let it be said that the five groups of bodily and mental phenomena, correctly speaking, have been put together by the Buddha in order to show the "Anatta doctrine" the central and unique teaching of Buddhism.

All those bodily forms, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and states of consciousness which the Buddha has classified and grouped into the five groups are only of momentary duration, existing no longer than a flash of lightning.

One never gets a right understanding of the five groups of existence, if one thinks of them as something compact, whereas in reality they are only fleeting phenomena changing as quickly as lightning.

The five groups are merely a classification made by the Buddha but have, as such, i.e. as groups, no real existence. If there arises, e.g. a joyful feeling, there cannot arise at the very same moment a sorrowful feeling; thus at any given moment only a single representative of those groups may be present, never any group as a whole. Hence it is impossible that a group of feelings, or perceptions, or states of consciousness may arise at one and the same time.

The four mental groups are never existing separately. "And it is Impossible that anyone can explain the passing out of one existence and then entering into a new existence or the growth, increase and development of consciousness, independently of bodily form, feeling, perception and mental formations. Each state of consciousness is always connected with some of the fifty mental formations as explained in the "Abhidhamma Pitaka."

In every state of consciousness are at least five formations present., i.e. impression (phassa) , will (cetana) , attention (manasikara) , concentration (cittass' ekaggata) and vitality (jivitindriya).

To the learned and noble disciples, who are penetrating these five Khandhas of Existence as transitory, subject to suffering and without any Ego, there will in his mind arise that ultra-mundane faculty which says: "I shall come to know what is still unknown to me" — (*anannatan-nassamit ' indriya*) , namely, the knowledge that appears at the entrance into Sotapanna state.

Through not understanding the nature of the five groups of existence, one gets possessed of manifold wrong views, and it becomes one's conviction and firm belief, "I have an Ego," or "I have no Ego;" or "With the Ego I perceive the Ego," or "With that which is no Ego I perceive the Ego," or "with the Ego I perceive that which is no Ego." Or

one falls into the following view: "This my Ego, which can think and feel, and which, now here, now there,. experiences the fruit of good and evil deeds - this my Ego is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change and will thus eternally remain the same.

But, the noble disciple who understands the five Khandhas as impermanent, subject to change and suffering, as not remaining in two successive moments the same, he will penetrate that liberating truth of "Anatta," the very root of all unselfishness, leading to Nibbana.

"Sabbe dhamma anattati	"Nowhere can there be found a Self:
Yada pannaya passati,	Who wisely perceives this truth,
Atha nibbindati dukkhe,	He turns away from misery,
Esa maggo visuddhiya."	This is the path to purity."

But the process by which the Buddha arrived at this "Holy Wisdom" is of the greatest importance, for therein is found the key to the solution of the problem of Nibbana—therein is contained the very way by which any man whose wishes and wills, can realize this same state of "purifying wisdom."

If there would exist in this individual process of existence an unchangeable, immutable Self or Ego, it could not be influenced by conduct and become better, and thus there would be no use in leading a holy life.

In as much as in the-whole universe nothing permanent is to be found, how can we speak of any immutable, unchanging Self?

Not by prayers, nor asceticism, nor by outward ceremonies, rites and rituals, nor by dialectical skill, was that "Holy Wisdom" secured: but only in renouncing all worldly and heavenly desires, all hopes and beliefs in an eternal Being, all inclinations to the vain glory of "I" and "Mine." Thus only can true understanding and intuitive wisdom be acquired.

It is certain that Nibbana is the "*Summum bonum*," the greatest bliss and supreme happiness that man can experience in this life itself. The Inscrutable majesty of Nibbana is profound, is in the stillness, is always the same.

In the Abhidhanapadipika, Nibbana is described in various terms:

Accanta	The Everlasting
Akata	The Unmade
Ananta	The Endless
Apalokita	The Undestructible
Panita	The Sublime
Sarana	The Refuge
Khema	The Safety

Tana	The Shelter
Lena	The Retreat
Parayana	The Goal
Siva	The Bliss
Nipuna	The Profound
Sacca	The Truth
Dukkahakkhaya	The Cessation of misery
Annasa	The Freedom from longing
Sududdasa	That which is difficult to grasp
Asankhara	The Uncreated
Para	The Further Shore
Para	The Beyond
Mokkha	The Deliverance
Nirodha	The Extinction
Anidassana	The Unperceptible
Nibbana	The Extinction of Craving
Dhuva	The Permanent
Avyapajja	The Unoppressedness
Vivatta	The Standstill of the cycle of existence
Kevala	The Absolute
Anitika	The Undistressed
Analaya	The Detached
Pada	The Law
Accuta	The Deathless
Akkhara	The Lasting
Vimutta	The Release
Vimutti	The Liberation
Apavagga	The Total Completion
Viraga	The Dispassionate
Yogakkhema	The Peace from Bondage
Santi	The Stillness
Visuddhi	The Purity
Asankhata	The Uncaused
Suddhi	The Pure
Nibbuta	The Allayment

These are the names given to Nibbana by the Buddha in various discourses. By this it becomes evident that Nibbana cannot be compared to anything which comes within the reach of our senses.

Thus let it be the aim of every one to reach this stage where there reigns eternal Peace, Bliss and Happiness.

Nibbana is visible to the mind of those who enter the Path of the Sotapanna, Sakadagami, Anagami and Arahata, at the moment of deep insight into the Egolessness, Emptiness and Misery of all Existence.

And this moment is reached by the Noble Eight-fold Path.

Thus Nibbana is perceivable by an absolutely pure and holy mind.

Just as a blind man does not understand what light is, or as the sun cannot be seen when there are clouds, just so the mind clouded by greed, anger and delusion will not be able to perceive the reality of Nibbana.

To say that there is no Nibbana simply because those filled with greed, anger and delusion, do not perceive it, is just as illogical as to say that there is no light because the blind man does not see it or because we cannot see the sun when clouds are hindering our sight.

Obviously, for an untrained worldling it is very difficult to get a right understanding of Nibbana. Just as a fire in a house may be hidden to our eyes, but as soon as we go there it becomes visible, in the same way Nibbana, which to the common man is hidden, becomes visible as soon as we reach it.

Also just as the Dhamma, the Cosmic Law, exists independent of our knowledge, so exists Nibbana independent of our realization of it.

Not by reasoning and abstract thinking can Nibbana ever be attained, but only by right understanding, by inward purification, inward conquest and by fulfilling the "Noble Eight-fold Path" founded on Anattasanna, i.e. the perception that all things are without an Ego, or Self and that also behind all these phenomena of existence there is no "I," no eternal, immutable, unchanging entity, a "thing in itself."

There is only a five-khandha process of existence which comes to a stand still at the death of the Arahata or Holy One.

One never knows a thing as it really is without seeing it, and this, more than anywhere else, is true with regard to Nibbana.

Although Nibbana is hidden to the eyes of the worldling, the Path, however, leading

there is attained by the noble disciple and is explained by the Buddha with all necessary details and every one can follow it.

Every individual therefore should lay the foundation for the attainment of Nibbana here in this present existence. The Blessed One could not have entered the Path to Nibbana whilst living in the Tusita Heaven, the heaven of bliss, he had to be reborn amongst men in order to enter the Path to Nibbana.

It is my conviction and firm belief that our striving for Nibbana should begin here in this very life, and that all others who believe that a later existence would give more and better opportunities for reaching Nibbana, are mistaken, are in error.

Not in heaven, but here on earth, where there is abundant resistance and opposition, seems to me to be the only possibility for a quick progress. It is our earth that provides best opportunities for it.

As a Buddhist, birth as a human being, seems to me the more suitable of all births in the sensuous realm. Only as man can one succeed in the struggle against greed, anger and delusion, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.

Hence as men we have it in our power to train the mind, so that, through thinking and reflecting, we may advance from mere theory to true intuition or insight. This is a natural development of mind, its ultimate phase.

Besides, it is through intuition that thinkers have made their greatest discoveries. Thus after a prolonged mental strain in one direction, the mind suddenly sees the universe face to face.

It is thus that the Buddha describes the attainment of His own Enlightenment, and it is thus that we also, with unshackled intent, shall attain the same goal.

Thus the other shore, Nibbana, will have been realized, the raft whereon we crossed the ocean of Samsara will have been thrown aside, and we will have attained the end of all existence and suffering.

We have seen that in reality there does not exist any Ego-entity or Soul, and that therefore also no transmigration of the same into a new mother's womb is in no way a continuation of the former bodily process but merely a result or effect caused by the selfish craving and clinging to life, of the so-called individual who has died. In Nid. Samy. No. 59, it is said: "Once all Ignorance and clinging are extinguished neither karmically meritorious nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable karma-formations are produced, and thus no consciousness will spring up again in a new mother's womb."

"Therefore, he who says that the non-production of this new life-process is identical with annihilation of a Self, also should say that abstention from sexual intercourse is identical with the annihilation of the child - which of course is absurd."

"Here I feel the necessity of once more expressly emphasizing the fact that without a clear perception of the phenomenality, or Egolessness of all existence, a real understanding of the Buddha's teaching, especially that of rebirth and Nibbana, is impossible."

"This doctrine of Anatta is in fact the only specific teaching of Buddhism with which the entire teaching stands or falls."

One cannot say that the Arahant is reborn, because all craving and clinging to existence are completely abandoned, rooted out, like a palm tree torn out of the soil, destroyed and not liable to spring up again in the future.

"Neither can one say that the Arahant is annihilated at death as there is nothing to be annihilated. What we call "Arahant" is, as we have seen, only a convenient term of speech and has no real existence. There is only a process of bodily and mental phenomena which have come to a standstill and is not continued after death."

The Buddha says: "Develop your concentration, for he who has concentration understands things according to their reality. And what are these things the arising and passing away of bodily form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. Thus the five groups of Existence must be wisely penetrated, delusion and craving wisely abandoned, tranquility and insight wisely developed."

But whatever there is of bodily form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness — all these phenomena he regards as "impermanent," subject to pain, "as infirm, as an ulcer, a thorn, a misery, a burden, an enemy, a disturbance, as empty and "void of an Ego," and turning away from these things, he directs his mind towards the Abiding, thus: "This verily, is the peace, this is the Highest, namely, the end of all formations, the forsaking of every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment, extinction, this is Nibbana. And in this state he reaches the "cessation of passions." And his heart becomes free from sensual passion, free from the passion for existence, free from the passion of ignorance.

"Freed am I" - this knowledge arises in the liberated one and he knows "Exhausted is rebirth, fulfilled the Holy Life: what was to be done has been done: naught remains to be done."

"For ever I am liberated.

This is the last time that I am born,

No new existence waits for me."

"This, verily, is the highest, holiest wisdom to know that all suffering has passed away."

"This, verily, is the highest, holiest peace: appeasement of greed, anger and delusion.

"I am," is a vain thought, "I am not," is a vain thought, "I shall be," is a vain thought. "I shall not be," is a vain thought. Vain thoughts are a sickness. an ulcer, a thorn. But after overcoming all vain thoughts one is called a silent thinker. And the thinker, the silent one, does no more arise, no more pass away, no more tremble, no more desire. For there is nothing left in him that he should arise again. And as he arises no more, how should he grow old again? And as he dies no more, how should he tremble? And as he trembles no more, how should he have desire?

"Hence, the purpose of the Holy Life does not consist in acquiring alms, honor, or fame, no gaining morality, concentration, or the eye of knowledge. That unshakable deliverance of the heart: that, verily, is the object of the Holy Life, that is the essence that is its goal.

"And those who formerly, in the past, were Holy and Enlightened Ones, also those Blessed Ones have pointed out to their disciples this self-same goal, as has been pointed out by me to my disciples. And those who afterwards, in the future, will be Holy and Enlightened Ones, those Blessed Ones also will point out to their disciples this self-same goal as has been pointed out by me to my disciples."

"However, disciples, it may be that after my passing away you might think: Gone is the doctrine of our Master: we have no more Master. But thus you should not think for the Law (Dhamma) and the Discipline (Vinaya), which I have taught you will, after my death, be your master.

The Law be your Isle,

The Law be your refuge

I Do not look for any other refuge,"

Whether Perfect Ones (Buddhas) appear in the world or whether Perfect Ones do not appear in the world, it still remains a firm condition, an Immutable fact and fixed law that all formations are "impermanent," that all formations are "subject to suffering," that everything is "without an Ego."

"Therefore, Disciples, the doctrines which I advised you to penetrate, you should well preserve, well guard, so that this Holy Life may take its course and continue for ages, for the wheel and welfare of heavenly beings and men."

Thus, the problem of Nibbana is an ethical rather than a philosophical one, and its solution is dependent not upon dialectical skill but upon right understanding and upon inward purification, Inward conquest and fulfilling the "Noble Eightfold Path' founded on Anatta-sanna, the perception that, all things created as well as uncreated are without an Ego, and that also behind all these phenomena of existence there is no "I", "no eternal,

immutable unchangeable entity, or a thing in itself."

In the face of such a path, all language is weak and besides the great example of the Master, no feeble words of mine can describe it.

The way is ever open for us who will walk on it, and when we have become as gentle, as pure, as wise, as compassionate, and as perfectly self-controlled as was the Holy One, the Perfect One, then shall we know, then shall we understand:

*Dukkham-eva hi na koci dukkhito,*

*Karako na, kiriya va vijjati,*

*Atthi nibuti, na nibbuto puma,*

*Maggam-atthi, gamako na vijjati.*

"Mere suffering is, not any sufferer is found

The deeds exist, but no performer of the deeds:

Nibbana is, but not the man that enters it,

The path is, but no wanderer is to be seen."

*Kammassa Karako natthi,*

*Vipakassa ca vedako,*

*Suddhadhamma pavattanti,*

*Ev 'etam sammadassanam.*

No doer of the deeds is found,

No one who ever reaps their fruits,

Empty phenomena roll on,

This view alone is right and true.

*Na hettha devo brahma va,*

*Samsarass-atthi karako,*

*Suddhadhamma pavattanti,*



*Hetusambharapaccaya ti.*

No god, no Brahma, may be called,  
The maker of this wheel of life,  
Empty phenomena roll on,  
Dependent on conditions all." V.M. XIX.

***Salient Articles on  
BUDDHA DESANA***

**SAYADAW U PANNA DIPA**  
**Aggamaha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja**  
**Dean, Faculty of Patipatti,**  
**I T B M U, Yangon**

1999

1. Introduction

2. What is Buddhism

4. Practical Aspects of Buddhism

6. General Themes of Buddhism

8. Why We need Meditation

10. The Sublime Truth between Two  
Extremes

12. Alms-giving (Dana)

14. The Resultant Effects of Dana

16. Morality (Sila)

18. Mental Development (Bhavana)

20. Some Salient Attributes of the Dhamma

22. The Threefold Training of a Disciple

24. Five Rarities

3. Proper Understanding of Action  
"Kamma"

5. How to attain Truth and Peace

7. Buddhist Way of Emancipation

9. The Buddhist Way to Genuine Peace and  
Happiness

11. The Sublimity of Abhidhamma

13. Components of Dana

15. Moral Conduct

17. Moral Virtue (Sila)

19. Buddhist Meditation Practice for Every  
body

21. The Buddhist Ideals for Enlightenment

23. Buddha Sasana

25. The Root of Defilements

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The principles in the Buddha's Teaching are quite appropriate and applicable to man's daily life. As man is born out of natural law of cosmic order, he ought to adjust with his environment or society. Being socially a moral person, he must regard himself. He can change himself. He can indeed elevate himself up to the utmost peak of Supreme Peace, Happiness and Wisdom.

Buddhism indicates the universal ethics of human philosophy and psychology. If man cannot distinguish between wholesomeness (kusala) and unwholesomeness (akusala), guiltlessness (anavajja) and guilt (savajja), nobility (panita) and meanness (hina), purity or merit (sukka) and impurity or demerit (kanha), then he duly declines to the stage of ignorant worldling (andha puthujjana) with a lot of attachment.

On the contrary, when man can differentiate between these pairs of positive and negative factors, then only he is able to uplift himself with his virtue towards the stage of a good moral person, for he in the phases of his day to day life, would not only avoid all evils, but also cultivate only good and earnestly strive to purify his mind. The Buddha emphatically taught in His admonition how man must avoid evil, cultivate good and purify his mind. These three main principles are, in fact, not only for His followers, but also for the whole of mankind.

As such, each and every individual aspiring to develop his or her pure moral life, positively needs to properly understand what evil is, what good is and how to purify one's mind. Here in this book the salient articles on various aspects of Buddhism will clearly show the reader through the ample light of the sublime Dhamma how man can live a good life of peace, harmony and happiness. Thus by shunning all evils, cultivating good moral deeds and purifying one's own mind, man is assured of attaining the goal of his aspiration Real Lasting Bliss and Supreme Enlightenment in Nibbana.

### **BHADDHATA PANNA DIPA**

## **WHAT IS BUDDHISM**

Buddhism is the Teaching of the *Buddha*. The word "*Buddha*" is a Pali term which means the All-knowing One who was fully enlightened and awakened in the four Noble Truths over 2500 years ago in northern India. Before he became the *Buddha* he was a prince named *Siddhattha* (wish full), born of royal parents, King *Suddhodana* and Queen *Maha Maya*. He was well-educated and trained in the art of welfare in his teenage years.

At the age of sixteen he married his cousin *Yasodhara*, a princess of the same age. As he was very thoughtful and wise, he always used to think alone very seriously about the

actual nature of live.

One day, on his way to the royal park, he saw an old man, a sick man and a dead man, and thus he was extremely alarmed and shocked at foreseeing that he would also come to such a condition one day. Then, at the sight of a holy hermit he visioned that it was the only way for release from these ills of life and attaining the supreme peace and happiness. On discerning the real nature of life, he did not relish to live a king's worldly life in the palace, and at the age of 29 he renounced the world as an ascetic leaving his family and royal possessions and went to the forest for truth and peace. First he went to the two well-known great sages, *Alara* and *Udaka* and studied their teachings.

When he found that their teachings could not lead to the attainment of final liberation, he left them. After that he searched alone for the truth and peace following severe practices for six years yet he did not find any solution to his search for final liberation because of his misleading way of practice.

Recalling the way that he had attained the first *Jhana* in his childhood, he then changed his method to the middle way (*Majjhima Patipada*) which was the only path of release from two extremes, i.e., enjoyment of sensual pleasures and indulgence in painful self-torturing practice.

One evening under the *Bodhi* Tree at *Buddha Gaya* in modern Bihar during his deep meditation on in-breathing and out-breathing, the *Bodhisatta* first attained the higher *Jhanic* states and spiritual powers. He then meditated on the arising and vanishing of the five aggregates of clinging to Mind and Body which enable him to penetrate into higher insight and supreme knowledge.

Finally at the age of 35, he gained the knowledge for Remembrance of innumerable past lives, the Divine eye which could see the birth and death of all beings and the total Exhaustion of all passions. Having realized perfectly the four Noble Truths - (The Truth of Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering and the way to the Cessation of Suffering), the *Bodhisatta* thus became a *Sammāsambuddha* which means the Supremely Self-Enlightened One or the Fully-awakened One.

After the attainment of *Buddhahood*, The Buddha expounded the sublime *Dhamma* for 45 years. The *Dhamma* that the Buddha taught is known as Buddhism. The *Dhamma* is an immutable law of nature or the eternal truth of nature of the universe which is always in existence whether the Buddha appears in the world or not. However, the *Dhamma* can be discovered and fully realized only by the Buddha through His Supreme Enlightenment. The *Dhamma* itself is therefore that which really is. In other words it is the doctrine of reality or truth comprehensible only by the wise or the Noble Ones. It is therefore a means of deliverance from all sufferings of life. The *Dhamma* indeed prevents one who lives up to its principles from falling into the miserable and woeful planes of existence. The *Dhamma* contains only non-aggressive morals and psycho-ethical and philosophical principles. Therefore it demands no blind faith, expounds no dogma and encourages no

superstitions.

The teaching of the Buddha, or the so-called Dhamma are the universal principles of cosmic nature by means of which all human beings can be released from suffering of life in Samsara and attain the ultimate peace and happiness of Nibbana. The Noble Truths of the Dhamma are not confined to only one religion, or one individual, or one sect, or one nation. They can be discerned and realized by each and every body provided he or she really wishes to obtain them. They are, in fact, potentially present in each and every one's mind and body, and applicable to all. But the essential fact of the Dhamma is to examine the teaching by oneself, to try to test it by oneself and actually, to practise the teaching by oneself. Then will one experience the most delicious taste of the sublime Dhamma by oneself.

As the Buddha discovered the Noble Truths (*Ariyasacca*) through human effort and obtained the Supreme Peace and Happiness of *Nibbana*, each and everybody also has the potential capacity for attaining the Supreme Bliss like the Buddha. The Dhamma is indeed open to all and free from any restrictions of authority, of rites and rituals, of speculation, of traditional biases, of Divine Power or Grace and of supernatural mystery. The Dhamma is a kind of solution to life's problem which is radical in its insight. One can approach the Dhamma as empirical, scientific and realistic. For only direct personal experience is the final test for truth.

In the Dhamma of His Teachings, the Buddha made the following noteworthy points:

"He who practises the *Dhamma* to the best of his ability honours me best. One is one's refuge, who else could be his refuge?"

"By oneself is evil done, by oneself one suffers: by oneself is evil left undone, by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity are dependent on oneself, no one can purify another."

"You should do your work, for the Buddha teaches and shows only the way. You yourself should make an effort: the Buddha is only a teacher. Be ye enlightened unto yourself, be ye a refuge unto yourself, be ye a refuge unto the Dhamma, there is no external refuge."

"One who practises the Dhamma, will in turn be protected by the Dhamma. He who imbibes the Dhamma will live happily with a purified mind and the wise always take delight in the Dhamma as revealed by the Noble Ones.

"The gift of truth excels all gifts, the flavour of truth excels all flavours, the delight in truth excels all delights and the final victory over all sufferings is the extinction of craving."

Moreover, with regard to belief in religion, the Buddha explained and advised the

*Kalama* Princes in the *Kesamutti Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikaya*:

"Do not believe in anything on mere hearsay; do not believe in anything that is handed down by traditions, or what people say or what is stated on the authority of your traditional teachings; do not believe in anything just by reasoning, by inferring, or by argument as to method, or by directions from your teachers. But, Oh! *Kalamas* when you know by yourselves that certain actions done by you are not good, false and considered worthless by the wise that, when perpetrated, they will lead to loss or suffering, then give them up .... and when you know by yourselves that certain action done by you are good, true and considered worthy by the wise, then accept them and put them into practice."

Furthermore, you can also analyse, observe and scrutinise your experience with the significant inherent qualities of the Dhamma and see whether it is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end (*Svakkhato*), whether it is to be realised by oneself (*Sanditthiko*), whether it is immediately effective (*Akaliko*), whether it is inviting all to "come and see" (*Ehipassiko*), whether it is worthy to be achieved (*Opanneyyiko*) and whether it is to be comprehended by the wise each for himself (*Paccatam Veditabbo Vinnuhi*).

Last but not least, the true followers of the Buddha, on the whole who live up to the principles of the Dhamma can assuredly enjoy the Blissful Happiness of Liberation (*Vimutti Sukha*) and experience the Blissful Taste of liberation (*Vimutti Rasa*) of *Nibbana* here and now in this present life.

## ***PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF ACTION "KAMMA"***

We always do actions in three manners, viz, bodily, verbally and mentally; in other words, deeds, words and thoughts. In Buddhism, these three actions are called "*Kamma*" in "*Pali*" language, i.e., *Kayakamma* - bodily action, *Vacikamma* - verbal action, and *Manokamma* - mental action. We believe that we will get bad results if we do evil actions, and will get good results if we do good actions

We are assured that we will have due effects of what we have done or deserved at present or in the present life, whether good or bad. This is the true fact of nature. We are, of course, conditioned by the law of nature. We cannot avoid the natural conditions. Nature eternally governs every thing; nature creates men and the universe; nature shows us what truth actually is and what things are going on time after time, day after day, year after year, life after life. If we say truth it must be always true by itself in nature.

For instance, earth has the element of hardness or softness in nature; water, the element of liquidity; air, the element of motion; and fire, the element of heat. These natural elements, since time immemorial, has existed for ever and ever and changing all the time from one form to another. These primary elements are usually existent in the past, they are still obviously existent in the present and will also certainly be existent in their intrinsic quality. In exactly the same way, the actions and reactions, or cause and effect, or activity and its result are really in existence for all time and everywhere.

If we can really see and understand the real work of nature, it is very clear that there is no other person or being who governs or orders nature to do something, this or that, or good or bad. Here we see that we act ourselves with our own intention or volition whether good or bad. So the actions done by oneself are not entirely concerned with any other person or being or creator or God, but depend wholly on oneself to be good or bad or to get reward or to commit sins.

The common saying is quite true that good begets good and bad begets bad. This true principle or theory was taught by the Enlightened Buddha over 2500 years ago. He said in His Teachings, "By oneself doing evil, one defiles oneself, by oneself doing good, one purifies oneself. Purity and impurity are dependent only on oneself, no one purifies another". It is quite natural that in the whole universe if there is a cause there must be an effect which is exactly produced by the very cause. Without a cause, there can never arise any effect.

In reality, the law of cause-effect is eternally in existence in the whole universe. It is obvious that an immutable law of nature provides that if there is a cause there must be an effect and conversely, an effect cannot be produced without a cause. Actually, nothing can happen in the whole world without foundation of either cause or effect.

As soon as a cause has been done due effect necessarily comes into being as a result. In other words, when a cause has been performed at the first moment and passed away

instantaneously at the very next, then the effect immediately comes into being again as its consequence, and by itself passes away in a state of constant flux. As such, there is nothing that can escape from the process of cause and effect, that is, a cause produces an effect, the effect arises just dependent on the cause.

In exactly the same way, "Action", i.e., a thing or an action done by a person mentally or verbally or bodily, must inevitably produce "Reaction" as a consequence. The action is the same as the cause, the reaction as the effect. Each and every one of us has these three actions with which activities are done, motivated by volition (*Cetana*).

In other words, without volition, no action can be done either. If a person has done an action either good or bad, intentionally or unintentionally, he has to reap the reaction good or bad according as the force of his own action. It is a plain fact that one naturally deserves what one has accumulated by one's own action good or bad. This is the reaction of his own action.

It is a natural and scientific law of the universe that whosoever does any good or bad action will surely have the consequence of good or bad reaction as an old proverb says; "As we sow, so shall we reap. Similarly, there is a Buddhist saying: "A tree will bear fruits according as its seed, whether bitter, sweet or sour"

Quite simply, we can expect only the result of what one has done and will also have the result from what one is doing or acting here at the present. Good produces good and evil produces evil.

It therefore wholly depends upon how one cultivates one's own actions (*Kamma*) of good or bad during one's lifetime, and one is certain to reap the consequent result or reaction (*Vipaka*) somewhere in this life or in the lives to come. A seed is something like the cause or action (*Kamma*) and the effect or reaction (*Vipaka*) is like the fruit borne by the tree.

What we reap at present or today is what we have sown in the past during this life or lives in the long past, and we shall also have to reap what we are sowing here at present or today. As there are three tenses of time. i.e. past, present and future, or yesterday, today and tomorrow. so also there must be past and future births or existences as we do exist in the present.

So we are indeed existent in the cycle of cause and effect or action (*Kamma*) and reaction (*Vipaka*). In reality, we are just at the instance of existence in the rounds of moral and immoral volition, (*Cetana*) since it is one's own doing or act reacting on oneself. Therefore, it is not necessary to depend on any other being or supernatural power or Almighty God or Permanent Soul or Spirit. Quite obviously, one's experience in enjoyment or anguish is the resultant outcome of what one has done by one's thought or word or deed either good or bad.

This is called "*Kamma*" in Buddhism, a law in itself, a law of universal truth and a

law of ultimate reality. It operates in its own field without any intervention of external independent ruling agency. It is a force or an energy of one's own volition by which one acts with one's thought or word or deed either good or bad performing various kinds of activities and at the same time acquiring resultant effects in consequence.

Buddhist *Kamma*. in a plain sense, means action or doing. Strictly speaking, *Kamma*, in the ultimate sense of the term, means all moral and immoral volition (*Cetana*). It is neither the conception of fatalism nor determinism. It is rather a dynamic energy always vibrating upwards and downwards according to one's own volitional activities done as good or bad.

With regard to *Kamma* formation in Buddhism, there are only three phenomena, namely, wholesome state (*Kusaladhamma*, unwholesome state *Akusala dhamma*) and neither wholesome nor unwholesome states (*Abyakata dhamma*). The states here mean one's own volition or tendency which motivates one to carry out an action of thoughts or words or deeds. And Buddhism here attributes that one's action (*Kamma*) is one's own, one's inheritance, one's cause, one's kinsman, one's refuge: if one does either good or bad, one is the heir of that action.

Proper understanding of Action (*Kamma*) and Reaction (*Vipaka*) or Cause and Effect is called "Right Understanding" of the true nature of *Kamma* formation as it is (*Kammassakata sammaditthi*) Thus we can see that *Kamma* or action is a real cause which engenders in each and every one the various statuses and inequalities that exist among mankind. What are in this present stage is not because of some other reasons or beings, but because of our own volitional activities.

For this reason, there is no spiritual being, or celestial being (*Deva*), nor higher god (*Brahma*), nor supernatural being, nor mighty power or God who can create or dominate one to be such and such status, position or destiny to lower, or higher abodes, except the cause of one's own *Kamma* that accrues like a shadow which never departs one.

Such being the case, from the Buddhist's standpoint, the differences of our mentality, intellects, temperament and say all kinds of equalities in our present stage are due to our own actions and tendencies or volitional activities both in the past and present.



## **PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF BUDDHISM**

Buddhism is not a system of thought or ideology, nor a philosophy, nor a religion: it is much more, it is indeed a way of life. In accordance with the principles of the Buddha's Teaching, one's life has to be lived through actual practice of that teaching. It is also a virtuous path that can be followed by each and everyone in order to reach certain stages of wisdom or enlightenment towards the goal called *Nibbana* in Buddhism.

The Buddha, as an extraordinary human being, was enlightened in the Noble Truths (*Ariyasacca*) through His search and practice, and then has shown us the way of deliverance through the sublime Truth (*Dhamma*). He advocated to all humanity the Noble Path of Liberation (*Vimuttimaggā*) to be followed so that all men can be released from the sufferings of life.

Buddhists accept the three noble objects of sanctification, i.e.,

- i. the *Buddha* as their teacher or guide,
- ii. the Teaching or Doctrine (*Dhamma*) as the way of practice and
- iii. the *Sangha*, the holy disciples of the Buddha, as the medium between the lay-followers and the Dhamma.

They believe the fact that the Buddha is perfectly Enlightened or Awakened in the Supreme wisdom (*SammaSambodhinana*).

The Buddha, through the Enlightenment, has taught us that our life, all life is a process of unceasing suffering and of no-self or non-ego containing nothing that is changeless, immortal or substantial. He further has taught us that minds of men are aflame with fires of greed or lust, anger or hatred, malice, pride, illusion, ignorance, envy, jealousy, etc. because of which all men are wandering sorrowfully in the world of misery and woe. The physical body too is continuously decaying and constantly changing with much pain of old age, decay, disease and death.

Contrary to all these sufferings of life, the Buddha has shown us the way of deliverance from human misery and pain. The first step in the application of Buddhism is the acknowledgement of these facts as really truth, and the firm confidence of overcoming all these pains of life through the practice of the Teaching.

The second is to realise that we ourselves are responsible either for happiness or for misery which arises only due to our own activities in deeds, words and thoughts. Therefore happiness or misery is dependent on our own creation or action whether good or bad. No one else can or does mould or create our lives in order to bring about either happiness or misery.

The third step is to realise that the main task depends only on the individual, not masses, nor societies. Therefore each individual has a positive duty to accomplish his ultimate aim by right understanding that one's life can be freed from all these passions of greed, hatred or anger, illusion, delusion, etc. And thus one's own self, one's family, one's society, one's country and even the whole world would be peaceful and happy. We can, of course, help each other fulfilling our duties with good intention or volition, love, kindness, selflessness, justice, honesty and purity to our fellow men as brothers and sisters. We cannot avoid our responsibilities as regards ourselves because we are indeed first and foremost responsible for our own good or bad.

The path of self-development can be fulfilled and accomplished only with ceaseless endeavour and constant practice of awareness. In the Buddha's Teaching, every action is to purify one's own deeds, words and thoughts. The real source of cleaning them is purification of mind from evil tendencies. For instance, greed, desire, craving and lust are cleansed by the practice of their opposites, e.g. charity or generosity and unselfishness; hatred or ill-will by love, compassion and observance of moral precepts; illusion, delusion or ignorance by right understanding or wisdom.

These qualities can be acquired in our daily life and if we really want to possess them, we must earnestly seek the opportunity to do so. According to the advice of the Buddha, the quality of an action depends entirely on the quality of thought or latent volition or tendency (*Cetana*) which always incites or inspires man to act. Therefore, if we so will to be cleaned, every act of ours can be purified through the practice of giving, generosity, unselfishness; observance of moral precepts, love, compassion, purity, honesty, right understanding and wisdom in our daily life. It is only because of this fact that the Buddha laid so much emphasis on Right Mindfulness or Awareness (*Samma Sati*) in every deed, word and thought of ours.

If we are mindfully aware and watchful of everything we act, speak or think, we will see that countless are the opportunities we encounter, in whatever sphere of activity our work lies, to cleanse the evil of our hearts and to fill them with good and pure thoughts till we are all the time accustomed to perform goodness and purity in our way of life. Only then would we become incapable of doing that a goal worth achieving can never be won except by perseverance and strong will. So do work for your own salvation, liberation and perfection with vigilant mindfulness (*Appamadena Sampadetha*).

## **HOW TO ATTAIN TRUTH AND PEACE**

Man, as a rule, is always wanting pleasurable objects for gratification of his senses. In his various phases of life, he usually imagines what he sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or thinks of a person as the real thing or entity or personality or substantiality.

He is, in fact, clouded by ignorance (*Avijja*) and ensnared with craving (*Tanha*). Thus, not understanding the intrinsic nature of their matter, he hankers after and thirsts for sensual pleasures all the time to satisfy himself or herself. He or she assumes that enjoyment or pleasure is the only real happiness in his or her life.

One is rarely aware of what ultimate Truth is and what genuine Peace is. Truth indeed is eternally sublime and supreme in itself without any change in the sense of ultimate reality. So, Truth is as it is or as it really is. Truth, in fact, is a phenomenon that is attainable; peace also is a phenomenon that is enjoyable by each and every one in one's inner realm. They are, of course, within the reach of every one. Yet man can hardly attain them due to lack of supreme wisdom or enlightenment. Truth and Peace can be enjoyed only when supreme wisdom is attained.

Most people, by nature, only believe in their own faith or religion. Besides their faith or religion, they hardly study or research other faiths and religions. They are therefore bound to be satisfied only with their own faith or religion. So most men do not have a chance of finding out the real benefits and advantages derived from comparison with other religions. They just dare not even think of other faiths and religions. They fear too much that they may anger their Supreme Being or God. They usually accept only the doctrine that has come down from their forefathers or ancestors without any critical examination or reasoning.

Truth and Peace are in reality mainly concerned only with the mental realm. In order to find Truth and Peace, you do not need to rely on any other Heavenly Power or Supreme Being, but only on yourself. That is, you will have to search for them only within your own mind and body. Of these two phenomena, mind is more important.

You are in fact given a golden opportunity of revealing your potentiality in your mental realm to obtain Truth and Peace. If you are efficient and ardently willing enough, you are sure to gain what you wish. Your mind originally is pure, but when it is mixed with impurities bred by greed, hatred, delusion, envy, jealousy, etc., it becomes defiled, and as a result, your body becomes impure, too.

Here, you come to see that the real source of Truth and Peace is within your mind. Only when your mind becomes purified, then you are certain to attain Truth. So at first, you must be purified and be true to yourself and others as well. Nobody else can purify man just by praying to God, an eternal soul or to the Buddha. But you yourself must purify your own impurities done by yourself. In actuality, man must work for himself to obtain

the absolute Truth and unalloyed Peace.

As a first foundation, one must lay down the human moral precepts or rules of morality avoiding bodily and verbal evil deeds, such as killing, stealing, telling lies, etc. And then you must purify your mind up to the utmost state of attaining the highest consciousness of Wisdom or Enlightenment. The purest state of consciousness is not defiled with any taint of passion. This state of mind is called the stage of tranquillity (Samadhi) or ecstatic state of mind (*Jhana*) in Buddhism. This is not the final liberation or emancipation from the cycle of old age, disease and death in *Samsara*. Man, therefore, must inevitably seek for this kind of final and ultimate liberation (*Vimutti*).

Man's mind usually is defiled with impurities of passion. So long as man is swayed to the domain of passion, he can hardly find his own Truth and Peace though they exist within himself. The important thing for man to strive for is cleansing or purifying his own defilement or passion. For instance, when light comes in, darkness usually goes away. So also, as soon as man enlightens his mind, the darkness of passion or ignorance would disappear from his mind. And thus the mind becomes cleansed and purified.

The purified or concentrated mind can actually see a thing as it truly is. Consequently, in due course, he can differentiate between mind and matter. Now he comes to see the actual nature of the aggregate of the mind and matter in his own being.

From this very stage, when a Meditator continues his practice of meditation, he would pass through insight knowledge, such as, cause and effect, observance of the nature of mind and body, arising and passing away, and discerning one's own being as egoless, soulless, impersonal or insubstantial. As a result, he finally comes to realise the real Truth or Noble Truth (*Ariya Sacca*). When he has thus realised this Noble Truth, it is said that he has attained the genuine Peace (*Santi*) that he has never experienced before. This stage is the final deliverance from all physical and mental suffering which is called the Supramundane Peace and Happiness of Nibbana or Nibbanic Bliss.

## **GENERAL THEMES OF BUDDHISM**

Generally speaking, Buddhism, there are four categories in the Teachings of the Buddha. They are:

1. The three noble objects of veneration upon which we have to rely.
2. The three kinds of impurities which we must dispel.
3. The three kinds of principles that we practise or adhere to.
4. The three characteristics which are offered for meditation.

### **1. The Three Noble Objects of Veneration**

We venerate the Three Holy Objects, e.g., the Buddha who was enlightened in the Noble Truths, the Dhamma, His Teachings, and the Sangha, the Holy disciples of the Buddha. They are called the Threefold Refuge or Triple Gem. These three are regarded as the essential and holy objects for a Buddhist. Without taking refuge in them with confidence, one cannot be a true Buddhist. They are, of course, the sources of faith and real theme of our practice. Knowing them in a proper sense you will find sanctuary and unshakeable faith in them.

Finding sanctuary in them, one can be liberated from the unsatisfactory aspects of life in the cycles of *Samsara*. Reliance upon them only in an intellectual sense is not good enough, nor is it final. After you have studied the life of the Buddha and His Teachings, you will come to know how the Buddha was liberated from the sufferings of life by virtue of His Supreme Wisdom and how He laid out the path for us to follow that He found out by His practice.

By taking as our example, the life of the Buddha and by following in His footsteps through the practice of the Dhamma taught by Him, you will eventually attain deliverance or salvation as He did.

The Buddha is the Enlightened One endowed with great compassion and Supreme Wisdom, who revealed the Dhamma to us for our liberation from the sufferings of life. His Teachings, the Dhamma, presents beautiful principles to be practised by both men and women. The *Dhamma* indeed can give us the light of the Path to end all our sufferings and attain the Supreme Peace of Nibbana. The Sangha, the Holy disciples who practise the Dhamma and have understood it and then taught the lay people how to plant meritorious seeds for the happiness of their lives. The *Sangha* devote their time to two main tasks, that is, the study of the *Dhamma (Pariyatti)* and practice of meditation (*Patipatti*) and teach others for the attainment of Nibbana. The Pali canon says:

*"Buddho loke samuppanno hitaya sabbapaninam,*

Dhammo loke samuppanno sukhaya sabbapaninam,

Sangha loke samuppanno punnayan sabbapaninam " which means that the Buddha came into the world for the welfare of all living beings. The *Dhamma* has been taught for the happiness of all living beings. The Sangha was established for the benefit of all living beings, to teach them to perform meritorious deeds.

## 2. The Three Kinds of Impurities

As for the second category, there are three kinds of impurities. They are greed (*Lobha*), anger or hatred (*Dosa*), and delusion (*Moha*). We, human beings, are constantly enmeshed or enshrouded in these three misconceptions. In a sense, we are burning with these three fires. We are born in the sensuous plane and we are usually swayed into the realm of pleasures. We think we can be happy only when we enjoy sensual pleasures.

For this reason, we hanker after the gratification of our basic senses, e.g., through our eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. With reference to greed (*Lobha*), we are always vulnerable to greed whenever we experience and enjoy pleasures. For instance, in the case of vision, when we see a beautiful object, greed may arise and pleasure may be experienced if we are pleased. Though we enjoy it now and again we can never be gratified and contented with these objects alone. The desire to enjoy pleasures is ultimately rooted in greed which incites the enjoyer to desire more and more; greed never comes to an end. We are constantly looking for newer and more pleasurable things without a moment of rest, yet we are not aware that we will suffer for that very desire. For this reason, we are unavoidably confronted with suffering all the time.

The Buddha said in the *Dhammacakka-pavattana sutta*: "*Yam piccham nalabhati tampi dukkham*": i.e., not to get what one desires is suffering. Besides this, He admonished us: "*Lobho attham na janati*": i.e., a man obstructed with greed sees no reason. Then "*Obhena hi tanhaya petti vicayam uppapajjanti*": i.e., He introduces the metaphor that a person will be born in the plane of hungry ghosts due to his own greed or craving.

We are also certain, in some way or the other, to come across anger or hatred (*Dosa*)" which is the most dangerous internal enemy for man, say, for everyone of us. Whatever evil thoughts one entertains in one's mind, such as, resentment, ill-will, hatred or anger, ill thoughts despising others, or destroying others. etc., all come basically from the root of anger (*Dosa*). If we cannot control our anger, we may commit crimes and become involved in fights between brothers and sisters, between one's own faith and kin or between races or even between nations. Civil wars, great wars or even a nuclear war are possible when anger is not properly recognized and controlled.

Because of one man's anger, many others or his fellowmen may be destroyed or killed. We saw the truth of this when innocent people were killed during the Second World War. With reference to anger (*Dosa*), the Buddha taught "*Doso attham na janati*":

a man with anger does not know reason. This was followed by the admonition which should also be carefully noted: "*Dosena hi kandajatitayanirayam uppapajanati*": a man aroused by anger due to its brutal or barbarous nature will go to hell. Then we have another admonition: "*Natthi dosa samokali*": there is no greater fault than anger

The last impurity is delusion (*Moha*). Since we usually are shrouded in delusion or ignorance, we cannot see things as they really are. Then, we grope in the darkness of ignorance. But we are not aware that we are in the dark; perhaps we think that what we see, here, smell, taste, touch and think are realities. But, in actuality, they are not. We observe only the superficial and outer forms or appearances

So we will be imperfect until and unless we obtain supreme wisdom which can dispel delusion.

Due to delusion or ignorance, man becomes foolish and barbarous and thus he can commit the worst possible crimes. The Buddha said: "*Moho attham na janati*": a man shrouded in delusion cannot know things reasonably. Another notable passage should be carefully borne in mind: "*Mohena hi muyhana sabhavata tircchannayoniyam uppapajjanti*". It means metaphorically "a man in ignorance due to a deluded nature will be born in the animal world".

So the Buddha admonished that these kinds of impurities must be dispelled as quickly as possible so that one will be free from suffering.

### 3. The Three Main Principles

There are three main principles which we have to practise or adhere to. They are: charity or alms-giving (*Dana*), morality or virtue (*Sila*) and mental development or meditation (*Bhavana*). In order to dispel the three kinds of impurities, we need to perform three kinds of meritorious deeds. Offering alms or giving a charity can eradicate greed, observing moral precepts or virtue, or in other words, keeping the thoughts of loving-kindness, can eradicate anger and meditation can eradicate delusion. Without performing these three meritorious deeds, the emotional fires that stem from impurities can never be extinguished. So these three principles are essentially indispensable for each and every one of us.

We should be generous in offering alms (*Dana*). The property or wealth we think we possess is in reality impermanent. In fact, we cannot own any property. One day, either we or our property will be gone, we cannot take our wealth with us into the next life.

Naturally our wealth is spent in three ways; e.g.

- (1) Through giving charity,
- (2) Spending for our own use and

### (3) Destroyed by some causes.

If we do not use our wealth for charity or for our own good use, it is analogous to a lake in a deep forest.

Though the water of the lake is very clear and sweet to drink or use, it cannot be reached and used because of inaccessibility. When summer sets in, the lake itself may become dried up in vain, i.e., it would have existed without being of use or value to any one. In the same way, if our wealth is not properly used, it is just wasted and its acquisition becomes meaningless. Therefore, we should spend our wealth in a better and more useful way through either for charity or for our own good use.

We must also be as moral as possible. For moral conduct elevates man from the lower level of instinct to that of higher wisdom. Without moral conduct, man normally descends to an animal-like stage where there is no love and compassion, no tolerance, nor reasoning intellect. There is no moral restraint in thought, speech and deeds.

In the Buddha's Teachings, moral conduct or virtue is of vital importance, for only by laying the firm foundation of moral purity, will one have the capacity for emotional maturity and strength to proceed towards the attainment of higher stage of concentration (*Samadhi*) and supreme wisdom or enlightenment: positively one needs to abstain from all vicious and sinful deeds and words in order to be perfect in the establishment of moral purity.

Obviously, moral purity can only be gained by the actual practice of restraint by oneself and not violating the moral precepts through bodily, verbal or mental actions. Moral precepts are, in fact, observed for the sake of one's happiness and security from troubles or dangers. For instance, when we observe the people around us, we will see that those who can abide by moral precepts are living happily without anxiety, fear or repentance: on the contrary those who break or violate the moral precepts suffer greatly because of their evil deeds and subsequent crimes.

By following the moral principles laid down by the Buddha, one becomes a truly virtuous person with perfect purity in moral conduct. As a result, one will live quite a happy and peaceful life without severe anxiety, grief, fear, repentance or remorse and finally can attain the Supreme Blissful Happiness of Nibbana.

The final principle for practice is mental development or meditation (*Bhavana*). It is of utmost importance in Buddhism, because without *Bhavana* one cannot discipline or develop one's mind. And thus, one cannot attain even to the initial state of concentration (*Samadhi*), required for the beginning of insight meditation. Consequently, it is very hard to see things as they really are and to attain supreme wisdom (*Panna*). In order to attain supreme wisdom through the practice of Buddhism, one is wholly concerned with the inner realm, i.e., purity of mind through mental development or meditation (*Bhavana*).

The human mind is inherently defiled with corrupting events (*Kilesa*), such as: greed



(*Lobha*), anger (*Dosa*), craving (*Tanha*), pride (*Mana*), wrong view (*Ditthi*), etc. These latent impure forces in their original nature arise simply from negligence or heedlessness in meditation: that is to say, they arise from lack of mindfulness or awareness of reality through the impact of sense organs with external objects and internal experiences.

The Buddha said: each of these defilements arises in its respective turn as the case may be " just as the rain leaks through the roof of a poorly thatched house, even so does passion penetrate an undeveloped mind. But on the contrary, just as the rain cannot penetrate a well-roofed house, even so passion cannot penetrate a well-developed mind". These impure mental states always appear unnoticed in the absence of mental awareness or meditative mindfulness through the senses. These impurities are certain to arise whenever there is a chance to see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think through sense organs. They will persist and unless we crush and reject them by means of the practice of concentration or meditation (*Bhavana*).

For control of one's mind, *Bhavana* is of basic and vital importance. Without it, the mind is uncontrollable as it flits about from one object to another. It is the mind that creates the troubles, difficulties or problems that control men and women throughout *Samsara* (cycle of death and birth). Control of the mind is the most difficult task for a person because the mind is usually delighted by unwholesome thoughts rather than wholesome ones.

The mind, in its intrinsic nature is the most powerful phenomenon and so the world or an individual is led and attached by it. It is only because of the mind everyone is swayed to its domain or sovereignty. Each and everyone is therefore dominated by a mind that guides as his master. It is only the mind that makes one impure or pure, just as water in the form of mud soils and in its pure form cleanses. The mind naturally exists in a state of desire or delight in evil, polluting a person with impurities, such as greed, anger and delusion, etc. If the mind is thus impure with these corrupting agents, the body becomes impure as well.

Such being the case, it is an obvious fact that without *Bhavana*, which can abate and eliminate ones delilements or corruptions, one can never obtain genuine happiness and real peace of mind. As the Buddha said in the *Digha Nikaya*. "With the development of morality (*Sila*), concentration (*Samadhi*) is of great benefit and value: again with the development of concentration, wisdom (*Panna* ) is of great benefit and value".

Quite apparently one cannot proceed to the state of wisdom unless one's mind is concentrated, for the mind polluted with defilements finds it very difficult to see each thing as it is. That is the reason why *Bhavana* is essential and indispensable to a person for development or tranquillity of mind. On the whole, as the devoted followers of the Buddha, you must practise these three main principles so that you can dispel the three kinds of impurities on one hand and develop your mind to the pure and mature stage so as to attain the Supreme Blissful Happiness of Nibbana on the other.

#### 4. The Three Kinds of Characteristics

As for the fourth category, there are three kinds of characteristics by means of which we must concentrate or meditate. They are:

impermanence (*Anicca*), Suffering *Dukkha*). and non-self or non-ego or insubstantiality *Anatta*). These three characteristics show the actual nature of one's being, that is, how physical and mental phenomena are going on in their true nature within oneself.

It is due to our unknowing nature, very hard to understand one's own being as it really is because of self—illusion, ignorance, craving, passion, pride, wrong view, etc. But when we concentrate or meditate on the actual nature of physical and mental phenomena, we will come to know that we are composed of only two ultimate realities. i.e., mind and matter. Either the mind or the matter itself is going on according to its own cosmic order.

For instance, by mentally noting at the tip of the nose, the in-breath and out-breath, or its touch with mindful awareness, you will come to see the differentiation between mind and matter. Matter, by its nature, does arise from the touch in the impact of nose-tip and air and then immediately it passes away.

The awareness which knows the object, "touch", is called mind. The so-called mind itself is actually nothing but merely a process of consciousness. There is no identity or entity in the process, by its nature, is only conscious element which also arises and passes away in a perpetual state of flux.

The mental states, however, pass away much faster than the physical phenomena. Therefore, within the entirety of mental phenomena, there cannot be found any permanent entity of mind or consciousness or indestructible soul or self. Rather, mental phenomena consists merely of an on-going process of consciousness which occurs through the impact of organs and sense objects.

It is only when the internal sense organs come into contact with external objects, that these different states of consciousness appear in the present. It is a moment-to-moment process. In the very next instant it disappears giving rise to the subsequent momentary state.

Thus, when you meditate on the touch and awareness for some days, you will come to realise that there are only two phenomena or two ultimate realities (*Paramattha*). i.e., physical phenomenon and mental phenomenon in your being. By means of applying your mindful awareness to other sense organs, you will also realise that what you see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think of a thing or a being is nothing but the arising and passing phenomena of mind and matter.

In this stage, you come to understand that the phenomena of the mind and matter are subject to the nature of impermanence or transience (*Anicca*). *When you understand*

*Anicca in a true sense, you will discern the nature of suffering Dukkha) and then of selflessness or soullessness (Anatta) . The Buddha taught in the Samyutta Nikaya:*

"What is transient (*Yadaniccam*) is painful (*Tamdukkham,*). What is painful (*Yamdukkham*) is soulless (*Tadanatta*), What is soulless (*Yadanattam*) is not mine, nor "I am", nor myself: thus it is to be realised as it is (*Yathabhutam*) by right way of understanding"

In this way, you must focus, scrutinize, and meditate on your own body and mind by means of the nature of impermanency, suffering and insubstantiality and also apply to other things and beings of all the universes in the same manner. When you have thus discerned the real nature of mind and matter, you will have an intense desire to be released from the sufferings of life of a mind-body being.

And by continual practice of meditation on the rise and fall of each and every happening in your body and in the world outside, then you will eventually reach the cessation of the mind-matter phenomena passing through the stages of insightful knowledge (*Vipassana nana*).

Consequently, your mind will be free from impurities, developing towards the higher mental state and be enlightened in the Noble Truths (*Ariya Sacca*). This is the state of Supreme Blissful Peace and Happiness of Nibbana in Buddhism

In conclusion, to sum up my talk. I would like to remind you of the four categories of the Buddha's Teachings:

1. The three focuses of Veneration. i.e. the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha* upon which we rely,
2. The three kinds of impurities. i.e., greed (*Lobha*), anger (*Dosa*) and delusion (*Moha*) which we must dispel,
3. The three main principles, i.e., alms-giving (*Dana*), morality (*Sila*) and meditation (*Bhavana*) which we must practise or adhere to and
4. The three characteristics. i.e., impermanence (*Anicca*), suffering (*Dukkha*) and insubstantiality (*Anatta*) which we are offered for meditation. By recollecting and following the four categories admonished by the Buddha, I do hope you would be able to attain the Enlightenment of the Path. Fruition and Nibbana.

## **BUDDHIST WAY OF EMANCIPATION**

In Buddhism as *Nibbana* is the final goal, the subject of *Nibbana* is indeed very profound in the ultimate sense of the term. But *Nibbana* is not the one which is unattainable or unrealizable, it is, of course within the reach of every man. Apparently,

*Nibbana* in a proper sense, is not easily comprehensible even for a Buddhist from both theoretical and practical aspect. As it is the final aim, all Buddhist aspire to reach it.

*Nibbana* is a Pali word which is generally interpreted as the extinction of craving for sensual pleasures. Many people are under the impression that they could find genuine lasting peace and happiness by providing themselves with sensual pleasures to gratify their senses. But this would be an endless task. Man's desire never comes to an end. As the saying goes: "The more we get, the more we want".

Therefore no man ever could fulfil the eternal thirst or craving of his senses until and unless the craving is wiped out of his mind. Man may work as hard as a slave until his last breath is taken but still his desire or craving will continue to take root in him, even though he is too old to make use of his faculties. The infallible method to quench his craving as taught by the *Buddha* is to calm down one's senses instead of gratifying them. There are four ways of practice in Buddhism for overcoming craving.

They are:

1. to give alms or charity (*Dana*),
2. to keep to morality or to restrain one's body and verbal actions (*Sila*).
3. to concentrate on any one of the forty objects (*Samatha*) and
4. to meditate on the actual nature of one's own mind and body (*Vipassana*).

These can quench your cravings. The more you practise these four principles, the more you can reduce or decrease your thirst. For instance, by giving alms or charity, greed (*Lobha*) in your mind can be dispelled and by observing moral precepts, anger or hatred can be appeased, by concentrating on the supreme qualities of the Buddha or Loving-kindness (*Metta*), your mind will be cleansed and highly developed and also the hindrances (*Nivarana*) can be kept away and the mind thus becomes completely tranquillized.

By practising meditation, you can attain the insightful knowledge which can see things as they really are and then attain to the deliverance of *Nibbana*. Man must learn how to control his senses in order to follow these principles of the Dhamma through self-training, self-discipline and self-restraint. He must also learn to achieve contentment and detachment. Very few people have realized that the cause of suffering is due to their own craving and attachment towards various pleasurable things.

They are rarely aware of the fact of being subject to the inescapable nature of old age, disease and death. And they are not in a position to understand that one day they would have to depart from each one and every thing that they now hold as dear. The Buddhist *Nibbana* is quite different from the Hebrew Paradise or Christian Heaven or the Hindu Brahma or Salvation or so introduced by other religions. The Buddhist way of

salvation or eternal bliss cannot be attained unless man purifies himself by becoming a perfect one or a Noble One (*Ariya*). The follower of other faiths believe that they can only find their salvation or liberation through the influence of power of God or Brahma by believing and praying to him.

Buddhists believe that there are certain heavenly abodes for good people who have done meritorious deeds to enjoy the sensual pleasure where there are also for lower miserable abodes for wicked people who have done evil deeds. According to Buddhism heaven is not a place where man can find eternal bliss, but just a temporary feeling of happiness. After sometime there will come an end to such happiness, and hell also does not mean that one is permanently doomed for eternal woe. When the force of one's evil deeds is exhausted in hell, one will be destined again for better and higher abodes.

Even in the abode of blissful heaven, one cannot get rid of the suffering of old age, disease and death, for as long as he has cravings or sensual pleasures, he will continue to be subjected to the cycle of birth and death in Samsara. There is a great difference between the happiness one derives from sensual gratification and that which one gets from restraining one's senses of craving. Here, the Buddha definitely taught that the highest form of genuine happiness or bliss in life is to be attained only by controlling ones senses and not by indulging in them freely.

Some religions say that beings attain immortality or the highest bliss after death, while others proclaim that there is no life after death. According to Buddhism both these views are unacceptable for if one's potentiality is perfect enough, one can reach the highest peak of genuine bliss even in this life experiencing it by oneself. Nothing is utterly annihilated in the whole universe. Buddhists believe in the process of cause and effect. If there is attachment in a person as a cause, consequently he will be reborn from life to life so long as the process of either the good or bad way of his actions is continually produced by himself.

Man in the sensuous world will not be released from decay or old age, sickness, worries, sorrow, grief, pain etc., until and unless he becomes a most saintly person or the Worthy One (*Arahat*). Even though an *Arahat* is liberated from mental pain, he can still suffer from his physical body since he is already composed of the changeable and breakable body as an effect from the cause of his past lives.

People in this world are for ever and ever struggling to find out peace and happiness by adopting various wrong ways. not knowing of the real path due to their own ignorance (*Avijja*) and craving (*Tanha*). It is very clear that according to Buddhism, no one can expect to attain real peace and genuine happiness by praying to God or Eternal Soul or Mighty Powerful Being and performing ceremonies, rites and rituals. But in order to attain this kind of final supreme bliss, one must be purified and good to oneself and others as well.

He has to cultivate himself by observing moral precepts and avoiding all evils, doing meritorious deeds and purifying his mind to its utmost to attain blissful peace or

enlightenment. Nobody else can purify man just by praying to God or to the Buddha to wash away all his sins. Actually, man must work for that by himself.

Nibbana can never be explained completely and satisfactorily in ordinary words because languages are too shallow and inadequate to express or describe the real nature of Nibbana. However, Nibbana is generally translated as the Absolute Truth, Ultimate Reality, Supramundane Happiness, Ultimate Peaceful Bliss in our common words with the most applicable terms, Yet they are not able to convey the true connotation from the actual sense of the term. Only those who have actually experienced the stages of the Noble Ones can express their feelings or experience of bliss according to their degree of enlightenment.

Languages or words are created and used by the mass of human beings to express things and ideas as experienced by their senses. On this point, one's expression is obviously different from others as the decrees of their knowledge are varied in nature due to their actions in the past as well as experiences in the present life (*Kamma*). For this reason, supramundane experience of Nibbana Bliss cannot be derived from such a category to conventional truth.

Words are of course a conventional or relative truth or symbols representing things and ideas known to us, but these symbols cannot convey exactly and fully the true nature of even ordinary things. Language is a combination of words expressed by human beings. So language is supposedly deceptive and misleading in the matter of understanding the Absolute Truth (*Paramattha Sacca*).

The Ultimate Reality or Absolute Truth can only be realized by the enlightened knowledge of insight not by ordinary naked eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. The Ultimate Reality or Absolute Truth .

The Ultimate Reality or Absolute Truth can only be realized by the enlightened knowledge of insight not by ordinary naked eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. The Ultimate Reality or Absolute Truth is eternally sublime or supreme in itself without any change in the sense of reality the truth as it is or as really as it is mentioned "*Uttamo*" most sublime, "*Aviparito*" unchangeability or immutability, "*Sabbannuta nanassa gocaro*". it can be comprehensible only by all knowing insight knowledge of the Buddha.

Nevertheless, we cannot do without language. To understand Nibbana we have to use words as applicable and perfect a manner as possible. So, if Nibbana is to be expressed and explained in positive terms as the "Absolute Happiness", it is all also likely that we may immediately grasp it as an idea generally associated with those terms which may be quite contrary to the actual meaning. For this reason, it is often referred to or expressed in various negative terms such as "Extinction of Thirst, Uncomposed, Unconditioned, Unborn, Uncreated, Unmade. etc. It is indeed the complete absence of desire or the cessation of that very thirst or craving (*Thanakkayo*), giving it up (*Cago*), renouncing it (*Patinissaggo*). emancipation (*Mutti*) and detachment (*Analayo*) from it.

Referring to exhaustion of all conditioned things and giving up all defilements. Nibbana is thus expressed in negative terms. Therefore many have got the wrong notion that Nibbana is negative and expresses self-annihilation of self because there is no self to annihilate and there is also no nothingness in Nibbana because there is neither space nor time where and when Nibbana can be located.

Buddhism holds that final extinction of ignorance and craving is the way of escape from the rounds of life (*Samsara*), but the escape is not actually reached somewhere and it of course could not be reached like a union with Brahma or God which is to be attained only after this life. The final victory to be gained by the extinction of ignorance and craving in the Buddhist view is the victory which can be gained and enjoyed in this very life.

This is what is meant by the Buddhist ideal of the Worthiest One (*Arahattaship*), the noblest life of a man fulfilled to perfection by insight wisdom. This noblest life has been travelled along the Noble Eightfold Path and has broken all the fetters and cankers and won the final liberation or emancipation in its entirety.

This transcendental or supramundane wisdom (*Adhipanna*) can be obtained before the dissolution of the physical body and thus the Noble One or the Worthy One has actually experienced the most supreme Peace and Happiness of Nibbana by himself in this present life

## **WHY WE NEED MEDITATION?**

We, human beings, generally want to get rid of SORROWS or sufferings and obtain happiness, and for this reason, we all are struggling to earn our own living everyday to get enough food, clothing and shelter. Though we struggle for our needs in the hustle and bustle of daily life, we can say that we are never satisfied and contented with whatever we have. Our desires never come to an end.

In the midst of various pleasurable things of the material world, the more something becomes new, the more we look forward to getting newer and newer things. Obviously, we are insatiable. We long all the time for something more pleasurable, one after another.

Blinded by ignorance and ensnared with craving, we tend never to be satisfied and be contented with just what we have; rather we are always chasing after more and more luxuries and pleasures. We are always wanting more in the way of money, wealth, position, status, power and glory, etc., throughout our lives.

We must look at ourselves, For example, our eyes see beautiful forms, our ears hear sweet sounds, our noses smell sweet scents, our tongue tastes delicious food, our bodies feel pleasant objects and our minds observe and entertain fascinating notions and ideas. yet are we ever satisfied with these sensual pleasures. Although one may get what one wants in larger and larger quantities. Is it ever enough?

The answer is very definitely "No, never." It is just like a person who drinks salt water trying to quench his thirst. What he drinks makes him more and more thirsty. In fact many a man may reach the end of his life still hankering after sensual pleasures.

So man on the whole is certainly sure to face anxiety, worry, sorrow, pain, grief, lamentation, and so on and so forth, because of his own craving. So long as man cannot overcome his craving and attachment, he has unavoidably to face a great deal of misery at present and will also be the same in the future.

So if you really wish to be released from all these pains in your life, you positively need a remedy for releasing and dispelling all your miseries. The remedy is nothing but insight meditation which alone will free you from all your sufferings and enable you to attain the real peace and happiness of your life.

Meditation means to keep one's mind quite calm guarding it not to go away here and there. Mind usually goes away to enjoy pleasurable things. Thus, mind is unstable, shaking or jumping from object to object. If so, one's mind is sure to come across anxiety, worry, tension, agitation, ill-will, grief, sorrow, dissatisfaction, resentment and so on and so forth. And then, your mind becomes impure with evil thoughts. If your mind is impure, your being or physical body becomes impure too. Then, you are sure to suffer from all these physical and mental ills or pains. Naturally an impure mind indeed will give unhappiness



and a pure mind happiness.

Actually, we human beings want to gain happiness and be released from all suffering. Then how can we gain happiness and avoid suffering? It is nothing but to control your own mind, or manage or train your mind by means of meditation practice. Only through meditation practice, you can control and purify your mind, and as a result, your mind will become calm, tranquil, peaceful, satisfied and contented, and then you will come to see the truth which in turn leads towards real peace and happiness in life.

Happiness really blooms out of ones mind. So, mind training is indeed of vital importance. Mind usually takes delight in evils (*Papasamin ramati mano*). If your mind goes away to evil ways, it will become impure and this impure mind will in turn give you mental pain and thus you are sure to suffer in some way or the other. Then you wont have ease and peace of mind. That is only because you do not know how to make your mind calm, peaceful, or happy. When you have meditative experience, you will come to know that meditation is really a source of peace and happiness which again leads to enlightenment in the Noble Truth. Without peace of mind and happiness, our life is meaningless and is truly not worth living.

We have two kinds of happiness, namely, physical happiness and mental happiness. If we have a wound or if we are sick, we naturally suffer from physical pain. If we have sorrow, grief or lamentation we suffer from mental pain. But, in reality, mind is the only thing which feels the actual suffering from both of these two kinds of pain. Pain usually arises out of mind, for whenever you come across unhappiness, you feel some kind of mental pain.

For instance, when you see a pleasant thing and if you like it, then the consciousness of greed arises. And in like manner, when you see an unpleasant thing and if you dislike it, consciousness of hate or aversion will arise; in exactly the same way, if you are not aware of the thing as it truly is, the consciousness of delusion or ignorance arises. Therefore you are not able to escape from these evil states of mind. These evil states of mind are indeed the very roots of unwholesome mental factors. And consequently, you will have had effects as a reaction from your own mental thoughts.

So meditation actually means to purify one's own mind from evil mental states; in other words, to make one's mind calm, peaceful and happy And then you will find the real truth or Noble Truth in your own being. In fact, you can discover the real truth as it is in its own nature. You will have to find out this real truth within your body and mind through the practice of meditation. When you find the real truth in your own being, then you can see the same thing in other beings too, because each and every one is composed of the same phenomena.

For instance, you now have to focus your attention on the tip of the nose to make a mental note just on the touch and awareness. In due course, you will come to see that there are only two elements or phenomena in your being that is, "Touch and Awareness." Touch is a physical phenomenon and awareness, a mental phenomenon, and you are indeed

composed of only these two elements. For instance, hair is a solid element or a material phenomenon; urine is a liquid element, the wind in the body is an air element. and heat in the body is the fire element. These elements are already existent in your physical body as well as in the whole universe, but they all are not permanent, they are indeed transient, changing from one state of constant flux to another.

As for mental element or phenomenon, the so-called mind is only a process of consciousness. For instance, when you see an object, eye consciousness arises and so on and so forth. In this way, there always arises a process of consciousness. There is nothing more than this. On the whole, only these two elements - mind and matter - are going on, nothing else rather than the flux of these two states. Here you come to see that the so-called person, man or woman is nothing but just a composition of elements, in other words, a group or composition of mind and matter or a psycho-physical element.

An ordinary worldling is originally deluded by ignorance (*Avijja*) and ensnared with craving (*Tanha*.) These two roots of defilement are the very origins of ones evil mental states. Until and unless you drive them out of your mind, they certainly will overwhelm you all the time. Because whenever you see anything you will take for granted that what you see is permanent, lovable, substantial and pleasurable and thus there arises the two evil mental states of defilement, namely, ignorance and craving, and as a result, you will suffer something in your mind involving either desire or aversion.

For example, when you see an object, your mind will be greedy if you think that the object is beautiful and desirable. Opposite to that, when you see an object, your mind will be agitated or angry if you think that the object is not good or makes you feel unpleasant. And you will also be ignorant or fall under the influence of ignorance if you are not aware of the object as it truly is. Here, you come to see that without meditation practice, you are sure to become a victim or fall into the domain of evil thoughts or defilements or passions.

So, you really need meditation. In a real sense, meditation in the Buddhist way means to see things as they really are in their true perspective and nature. It is a practical teaching of self observation or self-examination or self-analysis. It is a kind of scientific and reasonable method of analysis of one's own body and mind. So Buddhist meditation is indeed able to provide you with the real result of total purification of mind and the supreme bliss of liberation.

The objective of meditation is first to purify one's mind since all our actions come out of our mind. A pure mind is indeed full of love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity without any taint or shade of impurity. So you will come to know that the sustained practice of meditation will bring about a real transformation in your behaviour, attitude and personality.

I have composed a Myanmar verse about the results of insight meditation. Insight meditation is for the purification of all impurities or defilements. For the appeasement of worries and sorrows, for decreasing of sufferings, for the development of insight

knowledge and for the attainment of Nibbana.

Meditation in an ordinary sense is to think about a thing deeply and reflect seriously. According to our Buddhist sense of the term, meditation means to keep one's mind quiet or calm. not to let it go away here and there, and to develop it stage by stage for the progress of mental purity. It is therefore called mental development in *Theravada* Buddhism of Myanmar 'Naing Ngan'. (Burma)

There are two kinds of mental development. They are:

1. Concentration or contemplation (*Samatha*) and
2. Insight meditation (*Vipassana*.)

Concentration in an ordinary sense is to bring together one's thoughts and fix on one object or to give one's attention on one object. Contemplation means to look at a thing seriously or think about a particular thing deeply.

As for concentration and contemplation, there are altogether forty objects in the Buddhist Text. When your mind is flexed on one of the objects, such as concentrating on the much of your breath at the tip of the nose, it is called concentration. When you look at or think about the physical nature of your body, such as unpleasantness or loathsomeness, it is called contemplation.

We have four kinds of contemplation under the title of the Foundation of Mindfulness (*Mahasatipatthana*). Namely:

- (i) Contemplation on the body (*Kayanupassana satipatthana*)
- (ii) Contemplation on feelings (*Vedanupassana satipatthana*)
- (iii) Contemplation on consciousness (*Cittanupassana satipatthana*)
- (iv) Contemplation on mental objects ( *dhammanupassana satipatthana*)

Concentration or contemplation makes one appeased from hindrances or defilement (*Nivarane sametiti samatho kilese sametiti samatho*).

Most of the Yogi practitioners in India are following along these two kinds of concentration and contemplation, but they are not on the way of Insight Meditation (*Vipassana*).

According to Buddhism, these two techniques of *Samatha* can dispel only craving (*Tanha*) but not ignorance (*Avijja*). The darkness of ignorance can only be annihilated by means of the practice of *Vipassana*. Regarding insight meditation ( *Vipassana*). the Word *Vipassana* is a combination of two words *Vi* and *passana*. *Vi* means particularly or

specifically and *passana* means seeing or penetrating into the real nature of a thing.

According to the commentary. *Vipassana* is so-called:

(i) because it sees or penetrates into states or things by way of impermanent nature, etc., analysing in their true perspective from different aspects.

*(Aniccadivasena vividhehi akarehi Dhamme passatiti Vipassana.)*

(ii) because it sees or penetrates into the nature of conditioned things as impermanence, etc., in their true perspective from different aspects.

*(Sankhara aniccadihi vividheni adarehi passatiti vipassana).*

(iii) because it penetrates into things by way of impermanence, etc., from different aspects discarding their outward appearance or parlance.

*(Pannattim thepetva aniccadi akarena dhamme passatiti vipassana)*

Among the various types of meditation in the world today, this technique of insight meditation is a very simple and scientific way of practice and it is also logical and applicable to everybody for the achievement of real peace and happiness of mind which, in turn, will lead to a practical and useful way in one's daily life.

Insight meditation will certainly bring you real peace and happiness in your life. At first you will feel as though you were wandering on a rough and potted road, but gradually you will find it to be a real royal road, which leads to liberation from all sufferings and to the attainment of full enlightenment. I have no doubt that this very road leads directly to the goal the Noble Truth (*Kriya Sacca* or *Nibbana*).

I would therefore, like to encourage all of you to take this road so that you will also find the real way of truth and peace in your life and experience the real happiness of liberation in Nibbana. The real test of meditation is applying it in life. I want to encourage you to live in the world happily with a mindful awareness on the real nature of life. I distribute this technique of meditation purely and sincerely as a noble service to humanity in order to help those who are in need of help. The technique of meditation offers equal benefits to all who practise it without any discrimination on the basis of race, class, sex, colour or faith. I can definitely say it is applicable to each and every person.

Time is always passing away. The time that is spent can never be regained. So you must use your time in a fruitful way. Most of you perhaps are whiling away your precious time. Let us see the normal schedule during the 24 hours of your day. You usually spend 7 to 8 hours sleeping, 8 hours working, 4 hours going, coming and eating, 4 hours playing, practising and exercising for your health, entertaining people socially and carrying out family matters.

Now you have spent the whole 24 hours, but you haven't really gained much for spiritual progress in your life. In this way you are wasting your precious time, day after day, month after month and year after year. Meanwhile, your body is getting older and older, yet you are not making any spiritual progress in your life. There are 168 hours in a week. If you cannot reserve, or set aside just one hour per week, if not daily, for your own sake to obtain real peace and happiness, your life is not worth living. So in order to attain a real benefit in your life, you have to try and reserve some, if not all, of your free time in the pursuit of mental peace and happiness. Thus is simply for meditation or spiritual retreat.

Meditation alone will bring you real peace and happiness. You should have meditation experience so that you can obstruct or hinder your evil tendencies coming from outside through seeing, hearing, smelling and so on. Your mind is originally pure, but when it becomes mixed up with these evil thoughts, then it becomes impure. The impure or defiled mind will merely make you unhappy and miserable.

When you practice meditation, for instance, making a mental note just on the touch and awareness at the tip of your nose, your mind is only knowing and mindful of the touch and awareness. Then it will become calm, and you will be mindfully aware of seeing whatever you see, of hearing whatever you hear, and so on. In this way, you are ever alert or mindful of every mental state. So whatever mental state happens to you, you know immediately whether it is good or bad and then you don't keep the bad mental state any longer in your mind. You come to know at once that the evil mental state or thought has occurred. Ordinary ignorant people find it very difficult to know how their minds are working. They cannot see the real nature of things as they are. Since the mind usually takes delight in sensual pleasures. It is extremely difficult to guard or control one's mind. A guarded mind will make you really happy.

On this point, I would like to talk about the mind as the Buddha explained in His Teachings. It is mentioned in the *Dhammapada*.

"The mind in nature is wandering after, flitting alone, immaterial, located in the recesses of heart, flighty and fickle. It is rather hard to guard, control and bring under restraint."

"The wise, however should guard, control and overcome it. The guarded and subdued mind will certainly bring about real peace and happiness. He can thus be liberated from the bondage of the miserable world."

The real root of all sufferings in our life is due to craving, (*Tanha*), entangled with the four kinds of attachment or clinging, namely, attachment to sensuality (*Dammupadam*), attachment to ceremonial rites and rituals (*Silabbatupadam*), attachment to wrong views (*Ditthupadam*), and attachment to the belief in one's eternal Soul or Ego (*Attavadupadam*).

When your mind is fully concentrated and constantly mindful of each mental state,

you will be able to stand just on the present moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. Here your mind will be freed from all evil thoughts because you are fully meditating on each and every thing, just at the present.

On this point, the Buddha taught the following stanza: "Don't be sorry for the past, Don't worry about the future too, but if you can keep your mind attentive, Concentrating just on the present, Your mind will be free from impurities And so you will be really happy." In this meditation practice, you are sure to enjoy the most supreme Bliss and Happiness of Nibbana.

### ***What is nibbana?***

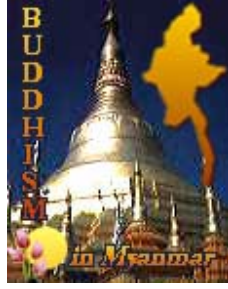
(From '[The Social Harmony](#)' by [Venerable Pyinnyathiha](#))

The highest aim of Buddhists is to attain *nibbana*. It is not an abode. It is regarded as the highest stage of mental purity. The nature of its great peace cannot be fully expressed in words, in thoughts, or in the form of similes. Yet, some scholars have presented it as something positive; others have on the other hand seen it as something negative. Anyway, the following *sutta* may help people understand what the nature of *nibbana* is.

Once Venerable Sariputta was staying among the folk of Magadha at Nalaka village. Then the wanderer Jambukhadaka, paid a visit to him and asked, "You, Buddhists, utter the word of *nibbana* frequently. What is *nibbana*?" Venerable Sariputta replied, "The destruction of lust, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion is called *nibbana*." "Is there any practice to attain *nibbana*?" Jambukhadaka added. "Yes, indeed, it can be attained through the practice of the noble path; right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration", Venerable Sariputta replied. (S. iv. 251)

If we try to seek the cause of the unhappiness men bring upon themselves, we can find these three primary psychological causes; greed, hatred and delusion. Only when *nibbana* is attained, the three causes and their effect, unhappiness, are absolutely destroyed and uprooted, and then inner peace appears.

Instead of arguing whether *nibbana* is something negative or positive, everybody should try to attain *nibbana* by following the eightfold noble path. For example, just by having knowledge of a recipe for a cake, one does not have an appetite for it and cannot understand what the taste of the cake will be.

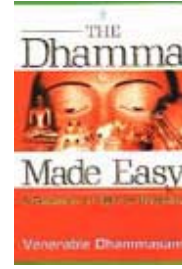


## ***Nibbana***

(Nirvana in Sanskrit)

( 26th May 1997 )

Venerable Dhammasami



1999

### **A DHAMMA DISCUSSION**

I am using the term 'Discuss' particularly here because in one of the discourses given by the Buddha, which we all know as *Mangala Sutta*, the Buddha has said that anyone who wishes to be successful, needs to follow the thirty-eight guidelines. They cover all aspects of life such as education, employment, marriage, social interaction and spiritual progress.

### **SOMETHING MISSING IN OUR CULTURE**

There are two points from the Sutta that I wish to highlight here. One is '*Kalena Dhammasavanam*' which means to listen to Dhamma talks from time to time. Another is '*Kalena Dhammasakaccha*' meaning discuss the Dhamma as the opportunity arises. When listening to the Dhamma talks, one gets to know more things, and there may be something, which one is not clear about. So one needs to discuss things to make things clear. That is why today I specifically use the term 'Discuss'.

In Burmese culture once a monk finishes his sermon, the lay people say, "Sadhu" (well done) three times as a gesture of approving what he has said and thanking him for the talk, without being sure of whether they understood the sermon or not. There are times when the monk inadvertently says some thing wrong. Still the laity say, "Sadhu".

So here when one listens to a sermon, the first factor '*Kalena dhammasa vanam*' is fulfilled. However, the second one '*Kalena dhammasakaccha*' is usually not met in Burma. This is a missing factor in our Burmese Buddhist culture. We therefore need to incorporate this element into our culture. It is with this intention that I have been using the term 'Discuss'.

### **NIBBANA**

Next, I would like to discuss a Nibbana. We always say in our prayers that we aspire to reach Nibbana, which is the *highest goal*. What is Nibbana? It

is very difficult to explain. Before we talk about what is like, I would like to point out one misinterpretation and one wrong usage in Burmese culture relating to Nibbana and its concept.

Buddhist Canonical texts refer to the thirty-one planes of existence, such as the realm of humans, of gods and goddesses, and of Brahma etc. Some describe Nibbana as the highest plane above all those thirty-one planes. Nibbana is not an existential plane. Some time people say in their prayers that they would like to reach the golden city of Nibbana and conceptualise it as a city like Birmingham, London, Manchester or countries like U.S.A, U.K. or Switzerland.

In the Shan culture, too, people do have this concept of golden city of Nibbana. So people start believing that Nibbana is purely a place, city or country totally free from all kinds of sufferings or with all enjoyable pleasures, and we have to travel to get there. This is entirely a misconception. Nibbana is just an experience.

The ideas of an ordinary person have been conditioned. Our way of thinking is mainly conditioned by the dualistic tendency of judging things as either pleasant or unpleasant, positive or negative, like or dislike, permanent or impermanent. There are Eight Worldly Things (*Loka Dhamma*) half of which belong to the pleasant and the other to the unpleasant experience. It means our way of perception is confined to one or other of these.

People in ancient India thought that indulgence in sensual pleasure was a way to freedom from suffering. On the other hand, the opponents of this idea said that torturing yourself, refraining from all the normal way of behaving is the way to liberation from suffering. You can see that they belonged to one or other of the two extremes. Some said in those days that life terminates at death while other believed that life goes on eternally. This is still the case for many people even nowadays.

Our emotion is also largely governed by this dualistic tendency. We jump for a joy when being praised and we resent, even develop aversion when being criticised. Therefore, joy and aversion are two dualistic stands that exclude each other.

Nibbana *cannot be understood in terms of dualistic tendency*. The Buddha abandoned it and found a new path known as Middle Way, which is not a compromise between the two, but the total transcendence of them. Since the way to Nibbana is not dualistic in approach, Nibbana should and could not be understood in dualistic way of approach.

What is then Nibbana? The Buddha said, "*Ragakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo*" meaning the extinction of clinging (attachment), aversion (anger) and ignorance is Nibbana. Here on earth if once we have eradicated three evils,



which are the roots of all other evils, it means we attain Nibbana. Nibbana is not a place but a state of mind where there is no such defilement to disrupt or disturb peace. Peace of mind continues without any hindrances.

Nibbana is grammatically a combined word 'Ni' (cessation) + 'bana' (attachment) which means the total cessation of attachment to anything, any one, any idea. At the age of 35, the ascetic Gautama became enlightened and we call him the Gautama Buddha. From that time, he started experiencing Nibbana. The technical term for the Nibbana experienced while being alive is '*Sa-upadisesa-Nibbana*\*?'

While meditating, when we feel tired, painful, or tingly, how do we react? We develop resentful feelings, we become very uncomfortable. In the absence of them, we feel comfortable. So comfortable and uncomfortable! Why we are caught in the cycle of this dualistic tendency? It is because *we lack Sati, (awareness) of them at the time they are there, because we are not mindful of those feelings i.e. their existence at that present time.*

The only ones constantly mindful of things every second are the Buddha and the Arahats. In the Buddhist monastic judiciary system, if a monk is deemed and declared by the judge to be in constant awareness, all allegations against him are nullified. (It says, "*Sati vinayo*" mean a court case that is solved through constant awareness found in the accused.) The message is that if a person is always mindful or aware of everything he or she is free from the dualistic tendency.

The *Maha Satipatthana Sutta*, a major discourse on meditation mentions two words '*Sato, sampajano*' (*Sato* — awareness, *sampajano* — clear comprehension) which say if there is mindfulness you come to comprehend all that you are experiencing. Knowing comes through awareness.

When pain arise, we contemplate the pain. That is *Sato* (being aware). We are aware of the existence of the pain at the time it is existing. With the presence of the mindfulness, feelings of aversion or resentment will not arise. The pain does not create more suffering. The pain normally creates resentful attitude towards the object. But it might develop attachment to feeling as well, not to the pain itself, but as you want to get rid of it and go for comfortable one, you are indirectly attached to comfortable feeling which is absent at that time while at the same time feeling uncomfortable for the pain you are experiencing.

When *Sati* (awareness) is there, both aversion and attachment do not arise. This is meditation of mindfulness on feeling (*Vedana-nupassana*). When we continue practicing the three qualities of mind are developed the ability to be aware (*Vinnyana*), to comprehend (*Mana*) and to think (*Citta*).

In meditation, instead of getting angry when there is a reason to do so, we

try to experience anger through developed mindfulness. When anger is experienced, then it can be understood. Anger is '*Dukkha Sacca*' (the truth of suffering). To be mindful of it, to experience it, to understand it, is the way leading to the end of suffering.

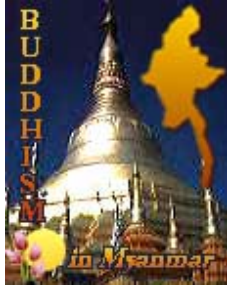
Instead of reacting to the pain, if we just watch it mindfully, we become more patient. The pain can no longer easily overtake and drag you on and on. It can no longer create more suffering. When experiencing it through mindfulness, you come to know as it is. When we know something as it is, sound as sound, pain as pain, thinking as thinking, feeling as feeling, we can free our selves from the dualistic tendency. To transcend this dualistic tendency means transcending the normal worldly condition itself. It is called '*Lokuttara*' — the supramundane state of mind especially when transcendence becomes lasting.

Therefore, when those conditions — *pain, anger, attachment etc.* — are no longer conditioning you, the state of mind in which one is in is unconditioned. It is called *Asankhatadhamma* (Unconditioned State). That is Nibbana. Nibbana (*Neitban* in Burmese) is not *Loka* (worldly, *Lawka* in Burmese), it is *Lokuttara* (something other than worldly). It is a wrong usage by our Burmese artists, authors and composers to use the word '*Lawka neitban* in Burmese. *Loka* (worldly experience) and Nibbana are totally different altogether. In Buddhist philosophy, they cannot be used together.

However, Nibbana, which is the end of the worldly experience, cannot be and must not be sought outside the world. It is in this world itself. That is why the Buddha told a monk that in this fathom long body there is the world, the cause of the world, the end of the world (Nibbana) and the way leading to the end of the world. By travelling, one does not reach the end of the world. Nevertheless, without reaching it, He (the Lord Buddha) said Nibbana could not be attained. May you all be happy!

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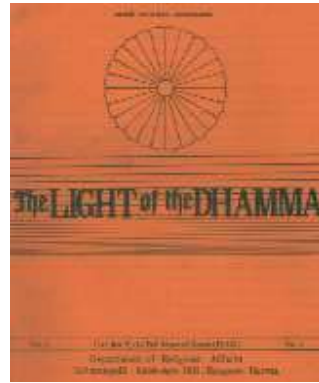
\* Nibbanic experience enjoyed while five aggregates (corporeality, feeling, perception, volitional activities and consciousness) is still functioning.



## NIBBANA FOR ALL

U HAN HTAY

Research Officer



Vol. 1, No. 2, 1981

The goal of Buddhism is *Nibbana* which is also known as *Santi sukha*, the supreme peace. Of course there are other synonyms for this incomparable bliss such as *Kheman* (free from danger), *sivam* (freedom from disturbance), *dipa* (island of refuge), *Visuddhi* (freedom from mental defilement), *asankhata dhatu* (the element which is the opposite of *sankhata nama* and *rupa*), *dukkha nirodha* (the cessation of suffering), etc. There are descriptions of the same *asankhata Nibbana* which can be known and realized by means of the practice of the eightfold noble path. This path consists of *sila* (moral discipline), *Samadhi* (concentration of mind), and *panna* (wisdom). Anyone, who practises this eightfold noble path, can taste the truth of *Nibbana* for a short moment, a long moment or a final duration moment accordingly. The best way is, of course, the practice of *Satipatthana* (the way of mindfulness) because it contains all the elements of morality and wisdom. It brings purity of conduct (*sila Visuddhi*), purity of mind (*Citta Visuddhi*) as soon as mindfulness on the mind and matter occurs.

Sometimes *Nibbana* may seem very remote and very difficult to attain. Actually this is not so. It is not difficult to attain the *tadinga Nibbana* (*Nibbana* for a moment) because virtuous conduct always brings peace and happiness in this life and in this moment. So long as the good life is lived, freedom from fear is attained. So also a man, who is full of concentration, enjoys freedom from mental defilements. If right understanding is developed through mindfulness, freedom from wrong belief is attained.

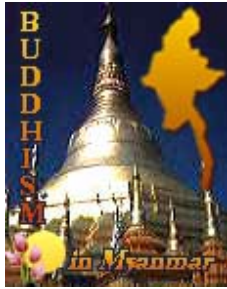
All people want the boom of the cessation of suffering. No one likes suffering. Therefore everyone can know through *Sati* and *Samadhi* the appearance of suffering (*dukkha*) such as anxiety, fear, longing, and other mental defilements. Similarly through *sila*, *Samadhi* and *panna*, one can eradicate the mental defilements called *kilesa*. If one practises virtuous

conduct, one immediately frees oneself from all kinds of dangers and their attendant sufferings. At the same time one instantly enjoys the bliss of peace for so long as *sila* remains. If one wishes to attain *Nibbana* permanently, right understanding of the four noble truths is necessary. In other words, everyone needs to practice *Vipassana* meditation to acquire wisdom (*panna*). *Moha* (delusion) obstructs the way to *Nibbana*. So one should be aware of the evils and dangers of *moha*. As soon as *moha* ceases, one attains the bliss called the cessation of *moha*.

In the same way all *putthujana* (worldlings) have to face the arising of *dosa* (anger), *lobha* (greed or attachment) as the occasion demands. Then one must know that the cessation of anger or the cessation of greed must be found and realized, for *Nibbana* means cessation of *kilesa*, (mental defilements). It will be seen that, once the *Lobha*, *Dosa* and *Moha* arise; they are the truth of suffering. Without the aid of mindfulness, many will not realize this truth. Therefore awareness of the fact of suffering is necessary. It is taught by the Buddha that the way to banish suffering is no other than the way of the eightfold noble path. Mere thinking will not bring the end of suffering. As soon as greed or confusion arises, one must, with the aid of *Sati*, carefully meditate on this phenomena. This is the practice of *Satipatthana* or *Vipassana-insight* meditation. By means of this practical awareness one obtains right understanding of the truth of suffering. Also, at the same time, one realizes the facts of *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anatta*.

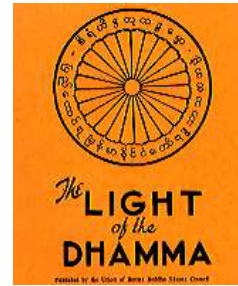
Now Buddhism teaches the truths of impermanence, suffering and egolessness in order to obtain right understanding. This is the highest wisdom because it leads to *Nibbana*. Without knowing these three characteristics of life one cannot understand *Nibbana*. The truth of *Anicca* is common to all. Change arises everywhere. So we may logically conclude that *Nibbana* is also the concern of all. For the Buddha teaches that *Nibbana* is the cessation of *change*. In other words *Nibbana* is the element of permanence (*Nicca* or *Duva*). Therefore we all need this cessation from change because change itself is *Dukkha*. Changelessness is *Sukha*. *Nibbana* is called *Santi Sukha* because it is not transitory, it is not impermanence. Except *Nibbana*, all are in the process of change. Hence all persons are under the sway of *Dukkha*.

All need to become good persons. Good character is essential. In order to keep this good conduct (*sila*) permanently, we all need right understanding as a guide. *Sila* alone is not sufficient. So the Buddha teaches that the practice of *samadhi* concentration and the use of mindfulness to watch the changing phenomena of our daily lives must be the greatest concern for all mankind. Only the Buddha can teach the fact of *Anatta* which can be known by means of *Vipassana* practice.



## TWO STAGES OF NIBBANA

U KHIN MOUNG



Vol. VIII; No. 2,  
1961

What is that **Nibbana**, which was actually discovered or rather re-discovered by **Gotama Buddha**? At the outset I would mention that the Buddhist **Nibbana**, which can give real peace and happiness to anybody, who realises it without the distinction of caste, creed or colour, and which is not at all like the heavens of other religions is not a mere implicit theory deduced by logical thinking. It is an obvious fact that can be found explicitly by anybody in the same way as any student of, say, chemistry can realise personally the properties of chemicals and the natural laws governing their behaviours by practical work, of course, after learning the theory. Theory, practical work and realisation constitute the logical course for the students of the Buddhist Super-Science just like the ordinary science courses. We shall thus find that the real **nibbana** can never be realised by pure reasoning, dialectical thinking and speculative imagination - the creators of unverifiable metaphysical conceptions, which are undoubtedly the obstacles in our way to the realisation of Nibbana.

After all **nibbana** is just a name, or term or word or sounding to indicate a certain findable fact. If, therefore, we try to make only an entymological study of it, like what some scholars are doing now, we shall never find the fact, as it really is, no matter how we hair-split the meaning of the word in the linguistic philosophical sense. Hence the difference between the shadow and the substance.

Considering, however, the rapid advance of the scientific knowledge, which has, to a great extent, dispelled the deep-rooted dogmatism and superstition born out of ignorance, I would say that we are rather better placed now to explain the properties of **nibbana** more convincingly. We know that ignorance or low power

of understanding that breeds misconceptions of various kinds is our greatest enemy. Therefore, the Buddha immediately after the attainment of enlightenment wondered whether He should proclaim his highly intricate scientific discoveries simply because of the extremely low power of understanding of almost all the people of his time. We all know that when he started His mission on the request of **Sahampati Brahma** he really had had an up-hill task to dispel superstition and ignorance by very patiently explaining the scientific laws governing the processes of nature in the language understood by the people of his time. It shows that to study the subject in question dispassionately, we shall have to keep our minds open by forgetting, if possible for ever, the traditional beliefs, mythological concepts and other preconceived notions I should also like to mention that before we make a study of the actual properties of **nibbana** it is necessary to appreciate firstly the limitations of mundane knowledge and secondly the story of the scientific discoveries of Gotama Buddha.

We shall, therefore, begin by trying to get a clear idea of the present stage of mundane knowledge. Let us find out the effect of **Francis Bacon's** famous aphorism, i.e., knowledge is power. Knowledge really has become an ostensible power, which manifests prominently as a highly developed power of understanding relating particularly to physical nature. Our scientists have proved it and there is no need to elaborate their achievements which are well known. But with due respects to all learned persons I must mention that our knowledge about the things in general is very little. At the same time if we assess our knowledge about the properties of physical nature, we are competent to say that we know something about it. I say "something", because our leading scientists tell us that they will know more about short lived particles when their liquid hydrogen chamber now under construction is ready for use together with their latest and the largest atom smasher, which has a capacity of about 32 billion electron volts for generating proton to proton collision process. They also tell us the truth that they are exploring only matter's outermost fringes. When they get the results from the proposed experiment, they expect to find many more puzzles.

That is about the highest and the latest knowledge so far acquired by our top-most scientists about physical nature. This

stage of knowledge should therefore be assessed as only "something" and nothing more.

If, however, we take a step further, we shall find that our knowledge about the working of the mental or conscious process is almost nothing. In this connection I must mention that for not understanding the science of conscious process as discovered by Gotama Buddha, we are not competent to overcome our animal emotional feelings, that give rise to all kinds of social evils. Surely hard thinking is not necessary to realise that we, the so-called human beings are the embodiments of the resultant-producing mental forces, such as, selfishness, greediness, jealousy, hatred, revengefulness, cruelty, destructiveness, and even self-destructiveness. Indeed, we have the scientists to find the working of the physical forces inside the atoms, but unfortunately we do not have universally recognised scientists, to find the working of mental forces inside us. I have never heard about the existence of the systematically organised institutions especially in the West for research to discover the higher science of mental process that can elevate the animal-man to the level of real human-man. On the other hand it is really a tragedy to find that some of our speculative thinkers, instead of enlightening the people to attain the right understanding to solve the problems of life, have propounded their dialectical theories very elaborately by using mass psychology as their instrument to gain their selfish ends. No doubt, their ideological slogans have wonderful power to infuse enthusiasm in the unthinking minds, which generally have no power of understanding to foresee the boomerang effects that will emerge by the translation of these attractive slogans into practical politics. Consequently individual as well as collective anti-social activities are increasing, I should say, by geometric ratio. Although we are proud of being a species of gregarious animal with a bit of tameness of civilization, actually we are not quite civilized enough to live together happily like our very young brothers, the tiny Little ants. We have often said that we are in a paradoxical situation of poverty in the midst of plenty. Actually we are in a situation of poverty, slavery and ignorance in the midst of plenty, liberty and enlightenment. Man hates man, man kills man and man is the only animal that is hostile to its own kind. Why are we in such a state of affairs? The only and the straight answer is because of our low standard of mundane knowledge. This glaring fact is often

described by our Western thinkers by stating that the knowledge so far acquired with the help of our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, faculty of thinking and reasoning as compared with what actually exists is about in the proportion of a single drop to all the water in an ocean. These are the basic stern facts to show the limitations of our mundane knowledge.

After getting an idea of the limitations of mundane knowledge we should know some thing about the faculty of the energised or developed mental force or energy, which is the key to open the door to find an entirely new field of human knowledge, which should be searched for by the modern scientists and philosophers alike. Mental energy like physical energy has two properties, i.e., kinetic and potential. The Western psychologists engaged in the study of different aspects of mental phenomena are now concentrating on the research relating more or less to the kinetic mental energy only. So far I have not heard about their discovery of the new field of knowledge in the light of the energised potential mental energy. I would, therefore, like to mention that, if properly developed or energised, the potential mental energy will be transformed into powerful kinetic or active mental energy, which emanates energised thought-radiations of differing frequencies in the mental field according to the stages of developed potential mental energy in just the same way as the transformation of mass into physical energy in the ratio of  $E=MC^2$  (186,324 X 186,324=3,476,632,976.) It shows that a very little mass could become a vast amount of physical energy, which we are using as atomic or nuclear energy. Similarly the energised potential mental energy will become powerful mental radiations with much higher speed than the physical energy. The behaviour of the developed potential mental energy is also like the behaviour of electronic radiations, which we now use in radio communication even in the outer space. We know that the electronic radiations travel with the speed of light. i.e., 186324 miles per second. Energised mental radiations also travel like electronic radiations but they travel with the speed of thought. When we think about a distant galaxy, which is at a distance of several thousands of light years away from us, our thoughts reach there almost instantaneously. It shows the immeasurable speed of thought radiations as compared with the speed of physical radiations. Furthermore the developed potential mental energy has



no time barrier. It can go back to the past and it can also go to the future like the time machine imagined by H.G. Wells. But we must not forget that our normal or ordinary thought waves or radiations have no power to communicate our sense impressions like the energised thought waves. To make it more clear the normal thought radiations may be compared with the High Frequency carrier waves of the transmitted radiations, while the developed potential mental energy may be compared with the modulated waves which are the combination of low frequency sound or picture waves and the high frequency carrier waves. If, therefore, we are able to develop our potential mental energies by a suitable method to attain a certain frequency, we shall, without any doubt, be able to find the entire universe and its past, present and future inhabitants just as we can now see and hear the happenings in distant places with the help of our electronic devices, which are only physical contrivances.

We can now say that we have a dim glimpse of the possibilities of the human power and knowledge. But we shall get a clear idea of these possibilities when we begin to study the story of the unique discoveries of **Gotama Buddha**. Here is the story. Life, as is well known, is nothing else but a bundle of problems. **Prince Siddhattha**, the embryo-Buddha, who did not believe in the contemplative knowledge and the deities worshipped by the speculative philosophers of his time, very seriously took up the problem of life as a scientific problem to be solved by himself as a realist without in any way depending upon any outside help. He detested the metaphysical ideas, such as, the reality, the absolute, the whole, and so on although he had to learn about them by tradition when he was young. He was interested only in the hard facts faced by each and every living being at all time everywhere, i.e., old age, sickness and death, which nobody can escape, no matter what station of life he may be in. During the first watch of one particular night while he was deeply engrossed in his earnest search for the hidden facts by energising his potential mental energy, he suddenly discovered one stage of supernormal knowledge of certain frequency of energised mental radiations and with the help of this particular super-knowledge or power he could see his past lives in succession vividly just as anybody could see his or her past lives in different stages of growth from childhood to grown-up.\* In this very moment he had become an exceptionally

old man full of wisdom and millions and millions years of age, and experience of various kinds. He found that he had gone through the mill more than enough as it were. He had tasted the pleasures of all kinds of luxurious life. He had also burned his fingers innumerable times. He knew all about worldly life. He practically began his hard schooling when he was a hermit by the name of **Sumedha** at the time of **Dipankara Buddha**. What is more he found that he had undergone a very strenuous training technically known as "The Ten **Paramis**\*\*". The most important discovery he had made is the process of life or rebirth. He then knew that the process of rebirth is a fact. But He did not as yet realise the working of the process of rebirth. Although, at that time, he was about 35 years old according to our conventional standard of measuring the so-called time or age, he was actually a grand old man, who could tell us the story of his various lives and experience. Therefore, when he became Buddha, he once told his disciples in the **Sinsapa** grove that his knowledge when compared with what he had said and taught was about the proportion of all the Sinsapa leaves in the grove to the little leaves in his hand. At this juncture I should like to mention that if we can appreciate the above mentioned discoveries as true facts, we certainly shall have no difficulty in understanding his other discoveries.

During the second watch of that night he discovered another stage of super-normal knowledge or power in another band of thought wave frequency.\*\*\* At this level he discovered all living beings throughout the universe and he knew all about them especially the continuity of the process of life in different planes of existence according to their good and bad deeds (**Yathakammupaga**). He found that some form of higher celestial beings, who thought that they were the immortal gods on account of their long spans of life also died at the end of their life-span. He thus realised the immense field of life-process and he considered it as an acute problem, which he would try and solve by all means. It was really a stupendous self-imposed task, that certainly would not appeal to ordinary minds. He was not satisfied with the two stages of super-normal knowledge he had acquired, and he kept on searching for the knowledge that would help him to solve all the problems of life.

At last his highly developed potential mental energy of the

highest frequency helped him to attain the supramundane knowledge during the last watch of the same night. He then discovered **Asavakkhaya-nana**. \*\*\*\* This is the highest Supramundane Knowledge to overcome all **Asavas** and also to attain Nibbana.

The most important laws are technically known as (1) **Paticcasamuppada** usually rendered as Dependent Origination and (2) **Patthana** rendered as law of relations or causal relativity. Incidentally he discovered that the so-called human and other living beings are only a process of rapidly arising and vanishing of quanta of thought moments and quanta of physical particles. He also discovered that the resultant-producing mental forces, such as the feeling of like, dislike, craving, attachment, anger, hatred, greediness, etc.. are the motive powers that energise the dynamic process of rebirth, i.e., successive births and deaths with the intervening old age and sickness. When he realised the working of the chain reaction generated by the various resultant-reducing mental forces, he also discovered the principal resultant-producing mental force, that energises the process of rebirth, i.e., the feeling of craving for the satisfaction of worldly desires born out of sensuous appetites. This is technically known as "**Tanha**". As soon as he knew about it, he had completely over come it, and he found that he was the happiest

man in the world the moment he had freed himself from the bondage of Tanha. By becoming the Master of the working of the psycho-physical process, i.e., the **Paticcasamuppada**, he realised that his life process will cease to function at the time of his death. This is how **Gotama Buddha** realised the two stages of nibbana while he was alive, i.e., (1) while alive the cessation of the arising of resultant-producing mental forces, of which Tanha is the principle agent, (2) the subsequent cessation of the dynamic life process at the time of death without leaving any residuum in the form of everlasting pure mind or universal self or higher self or atman or holy spirit or brahma or other metaphysical imagaries.

It is now clear to us that as long as the process of rebirth is kept alive or energised by the resultant-producing mental forces, the living beings will appear with all the salient characteristics of birth, old age, sickness and death in succession like the moving

pictures on the cinema screens performing emotional dramas and tragedies of various kinds that can generate laughters and tears. But it goes without saying that these characteristics are sure to disappear with the cessation of the process of life just like the disappearance of the motion pictures as soon as the cinematography machine stops working. These two factors are related. One gives rise to the other as chain reaction. Who can find the pictures that once appeared alive on the cinema screen? Where have they gone to? Have they joined the everlasting universal mind or spirit or soul to become one and the whole in some corner of the universe? Therefore those, whose power of understanding is blockaded by the static concepts, such as, eternalism, everlasting, oneness, wholeness, reality, etc. will never understand specially the second stage of **nibbana**.

The first stage of **nibbana** is technically known as "**KILESANIBBANA**" or "**SAUPADI-SESANIBBANA**". It may briefly be defined as the cessation of the resultant-producing mental forces emanating mainly from the worldly feelings of like and dislike. The second stage of **nibbana** is technically known as "**KHANDHANIBBANA**" or "**ANU-PADI-SESANIBBANA**". It may be defined as the complete cessation of all the resultant-producing mental forces including the process of rebirth.

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\* **Pubbenivasa-abhinnana**: By the insight known as remembrance of previous circumstances the past history of one's self, or of another can be read. This is called Knowledge of past existences.

\*\* **Paramitas** or **Parami**: Perfections. There are ten kinds of Perfections. They are: 1. Almsgiving, 2. Morality, 3. Renunciation, 4. Wisdom, 5. Energy, 6. Patience, 7. Truthfulness, 8. Determination, 9. Loving-kindness, 10. Equanimity.

\*\*\* **Dibba-cakku-abhinnana** Celestial eye.

\*\*\*\* This is the same as the Fruition of Holiness.

This is the Knowledge which eradicates all **asavas** (mental impurities) whatsoever.

## **A DIALOGUE ON NIBBANA**

Author: [U Shwe Zan Aung](#), D. Litt., (1871- 1932)  
The Translator of 'The Compendium of Philosophy'

### **THE JOURNAL OF THE BURMA RESEARCH SOCIETY (1911-1977)**

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Persons of the Dialogue: **Agga, Sumana, Teja and Tissa**

*The scene is laid in the Nandavanta laura in the Sagaing hills.*

**Sumana.** Good evening, Sir. How is Your Reverence keeping?

**Agga.** I am four score years old to-day, but I feel quite strong for my age. I thank you much for your very kind enquiry. May I know who you are?

**Sumana.** I am Sumana, a pupil of Dr. Ledi. Your longevity is the result of the purity of your *silas*.

**Agga.** Is your master hale and hearty.

**Sumana.** He, too, is advancing in years and is slightly infirm with age. But, though the flesh is weak, his spirit is as strong as ever.

**Agga.** He is comparatively young and it is my earnest hope that he will soon be restored to perfect health and be spared many more years to come so that he may be able to continue, with renewed vigour, the good work he has already done in the way of propagation of our religion. But will you tell me the object of your visit at this late hour in the after noon, for you stem rather intent upon something?

**Sumana.** I have come here on purpose and I have brought a friend of mine with me.

**Agga.** You are welcome to my cloister. I have made this little retreat my abode since my master's death at Mingun as it was very suit able for meditation. There were very few hermitages then, but a great many have sprung up, like mushrooms, since. What is your companion's name?

**Sumana.** He is Tissa, a pupil of the late Dr. Myobyngyi.

**Agga.** I extend the hospitality of this my humble roof to you also, **Tissa.** Your master made the *Compendium of Philosophy* his speciality and, if I am not mistaken, he is followed by the majority of students of Buddhism in Burma. Is it not?

**Tissa.** I should think so, Sir.

**Agga.** Sumana, you have as yet to specify the nature of your business.

**Sumana.** Sir, we have sought you here because, in all accounts we have heard of you, you are represented as the only disciple of Dr. Shwegyin, who still holds the antiquated view that Nibbana is something in the nature of a mental or spiritual. Perhaps we are disturbing your solitude. Are we interrupting your thoughts?

**Agga.** My thoughts flow as easily in conversation as when I am alone. I take your observations on my waster's view in good spirit. He spent practically a life-time over the question of Nibbana and the results of his labours in this field are embodied in a great work entitled the *Mahanibbuta-nibbuta*. His is a view hallowed by antiquity and I adhere to it.

**Sumana.** But, Sir, was it not a fact that Dr. Ingan, the late head of your sect, who was himself the disciple of your own master, had expressed his opinion that Ledi's news are sounder?

**Agga.** Yes. Ingan was a fine scholar. But it does not follow that he was cleverer than his master.

**Sumana.** Ledi's view that Nibbana is nothing but calm, tranquillity or peace (*santi*) has been accepted throughout the length and breadth of Burma.

**Agga.** Sumana, I am not alone in my persuasion that Nibbana is something more than *mere* calm (*santi-matta*). I have up here a friend of mine from Henzada. His name is Teja. His master, U Ukkamsamala., the late famous Doctor of Okpo, held that Nibbana is unique mind and body. Is it not, Teja?

**Teja.** Yes, Sir.

**Agga.** The annihilationistic school, however, teaches in effect that Nibbana is pure nothing.

**Sumana.** But this view of annihilation has been exploded by Buddhist writers. E.g., Sumangalasami, the well-known author of the famous *Tikagyaw*, distinctly says that Nibbana is not annihilation (*tuccha or abbava*)

**Agga.** Quite so. But the fact that every writer has had to insist on Nibbana being something shows, does it not, that this erroneous view has been held by many.

Even Ariyavamsa of Sagaing, the author of the *Manisaramanjusa*, a deep student, and an able exponent, of the *Tikagyaw*, as late as the 15th Century, seems to have leaned, in his *Manidipa*, to the annihilationistic view when he said that we should not use the expression 'Nibbana is attained' because there are still khandhas in the Sa-upadisesa Nibbana and because there is nothing left in the

Anupadisesa to be attained. According to him the attainment of Nibbana consists in having Nibbana merely as an object of path and fruitional consciousnesses.

The common sense school holds the extreme opposite view that Nibbana is a paradise.

These two schools claim the ignorant majority.

**Sumana.** It is no good referring to the views of the ignorant.

**Agga.** Well, Sumana, I have brought this matter up at the outset with a double purpose: -

- *First*, to extract from your own lips an admission that Nibbana is something;
- *Secondly*, to show that majority does not count in matters abstruse, recondite and philosophical, since you have endeavoured to convince me of the truth of Ledi's views because they are accepted by the majority.

**Teja** (interposed.) We all are agreed that Nibbana is something, though we differ as to the nature of that.

**Agga.** Yes. Burma, I mean the Burmese Buddhist world of philosophy, is divided into three camps, so to speak. There is the Shwegyin school which holds that Nibbana is spiritual mind, while the Okpo school advances the view that it is unique mind and body. The Ledi school, however, teaches that it is neither mind nor body but purely calm.

Now, before deciding which of these three views is correct, a few preliminary questions shall have to be gone into. Our philosophers bring four categories, to wit, mind, mental properties, matter and Nibbana, under a more general concept of reality (*paramattha*). And Nibbana is a reality of realities.

**Sumana.** Undoubtedly.

**Agga.** Then, it is essential that we should first of all clearly understand what is meant by reality. Do you agree?

**Sumana.** Certainly.

**Agga.** Pray, tell me, Sumana, what you understand by the term 'real.'

**Sumana.** I would define the real as that which is existent. This is in accordance with Buddhaghosa's explanation of the term in his commentary on the *Kathavatthu* in the sense of manifestation (bhutattho).

**Agga.** The word existent is rather ambiguous. Does it include that which has existed, that which exists and that which will exist?

**Sumana.** Yes, it does.

**Agga.** Do you, then, mean that which has existed in the past is still real?

**Sumana.** I should think so, for I can vividly imagine yesterday's fire to be existent.

**Agga.** Here you have confounded an image with a reality of which it is but a representation. The latter exists independent of your mind but the former does not. The image is a symbol of one individual object depicted to mind's eye (*uggaha-nimitta*). What is called the after-image (*patipbhaga-nimitta*) in the language of meditation is a concept, being the symbol of many objects. Both symbols, however, are mere signs (*nimitta-pannatti*) because they exist only in our minds like hare's horns or tortoise' hairs.

**Sumana.** I own it. But the two fires are alike in their characteristics of heating or burning.

**Agga.** Does yesterday's fire burn any one to-day?

**Sumana.** Nay, it does not.

**Agga.** The reason is that you are not comparing the two actual fires of equal intensity of to-day.

**Sumana.** I am comparing my *idea* of yesterday's fire with the actual fire of to-day.

**Agga.** You cannot compare two disparate things, e.g., an idea with a reality; you have merely compared your idea of yesterday's fire with your idea of to-day's fire.

**Tissa** (interposed). But, Sir, is not a fire always fire by reason of its characteristics of burning?

**Agga.** Nay, that which no longer burns is not a *fire* at all.

**Tissa.** I mean that both yesterday's fire and to-day's fire are characterized by identical qualities of heating (*teja*).

**Agga.** This is only bringing individuals under a general, class concept. You may define the universal term fire as that which burns and then show that every individual fire comes within your definition. Logical definition is a legitimate mode of mental procedure.

**Tissa.** For this reason I say that fire is a reality because it never gives up its characteristics of burning.

**Agga.** The real fire burns but the concept fire does not. In omitting to make the distinction between a reality and a concept, I am afraid, Tissa, that you lean to the views of the *Sabbathivadins*.

**Tissa.** Pray, what are the views of this sect?



**Agga.** They hold that all past, present and future things exist because they do not give up the characteristics of *khandhas* (aggregates) If their views be correct, every concept would be real like Plato's Ideas. I take it for granted that every student of philosophy understands what I mean by Plato's ideas.

**Tissa.** Yes. Plato is a *niccavadin* who believes in the reality of his eternal and perfect ideas.

**Agga.** Space is an eternal idea of containing things. It always retains this feature. But you would not say that it is real for that reason. Again, time is always time and is never converted into space, but it is no more real than space is. Similarly with all other concepts. In fact, Platonic realism, which is really idealism or conceptualism or nominalism had been very ably refuted by the Elder Moggliputta **Tissa.** If you need the details of his argument, I must refer you to the *Sabbamatthivada Katha* in the *Kathavatthu (Points of Controversy)*.

According to the orthodox view, the real is ever confined to the present. Yesterday's fire was real only while it was burning; and to morrow's fire will be real when it comes into being but not otherwise. In other words, the past fire which has burnt itself out is no longer real and the future fire which will burn is not yet real. Both the past and future things are at present but mere concepts, notions, ideas, mental views or aspects. I suppose you agree to this. Do you not?

**Tissa.** Yes, I do.

**Agga.** Then, Sumana will have to amend his definition of the real. Instead of defining it as that which is *existent*, it would be more accurate to define it as that which is *existing*.

**Sumana.** I have no objection to the proposed amendment. I acknowledge that the real is explained by a synonymous term *vijjamana* which is generally rendered into Burmese by "existing".

**Agga.** Yes. This useful word is formed from root *vid*—'to know', the passive suffix *ya* and the present participial ending *mana*. It literally means 'being known' at the present moment. To be known is to be evident and to be evident is to manifest. But a thing cannot manifest itself without a real being. Its intensive form *samvijjamana* has been intentionally adopted to emphasise the fact that neither the past nor the future thing is real but that the real is confined to the present only. So far we all are agreed that one condition of reality is that it must be *existing*.

**Tissa.** Granted.

**Agga.** But our idea of reality is not yet complete. For eternalists may understand the term 'existing' as existing for ever without a change. The other test of reality is, therefore, that it is in a *continual flux*, while concepts are constant.

**Tissa.** Is it not the other way about? Silver, when manufactured into different articles receives several names of cup, bowl, plate and so on in turn while the metal silver remains the same. In this illustration the metal silver corresponds to the reality while the names 'cup', 'bowl', etc., are mere concepts. Hence concepts change from 'cup' to 'bowl' and from 'bowl' to 'plate', but the metal remains unchanged.

**Agga.** Even the name silver, nay, the name metal itself, is but a concept. But I will not mince matters. I understand you to mean the ultimate constituents of matter when you say silver or metal. But when you say 'cup', 'bowl'. etc., I shall understand you to confine yourself to the names only.

**Tissa.** Yes, that is exactly what I mean.

**Agga.** Now, to regard the ultimate constituents or contents of a piece of metal called silver as constant is heresy due to hallucinations of perception, view or judgement; for, did not the Buddha say that all things in the making are in a state of flux?

There is also a fallacy in your argument that concept 'cup' changes to concept 'bowl' which in turn changes to 'plate'. A concept, once formed, is never lost. It becomes a universal term held in reserve for application to similar individual objects at any future time. This fallacy has been well exploded in the *Kathavatthu*. Speaking of a certain white cloth which, say, is turned black, the heterodox opponent asked: Is the whiteness given up? The orthodox adherent answered it in the affirmative because white colour as a reality had been replaced by another reality, black colour. But when the question was: Is the *clothness* given up?, the orthodox answer was in the negative because "clothness" is a mere concept arising from a combination of single threads.

**Tissa.** I acknowledge that it is so.

**Agga.** Then, do you agree that for anything to be real the following two conditions must be satisfied?

- (a) That it must be *existing*; and
- (b) That it must be *in a flow*.

**Tissa.** Yes, I do.

**Agga.** In that case, reality may be defined as an existing condition of flux. Therefore, mind, mental properties, matter and Nibbana, if allowed a real being, must satisfy the above definition. I mean that even Nibbana forms no exception. Otherwise it would not be real. You should be able to distinguish what I may call book-mind and lip-Nibbana from real ones. The book-mind and the lip-Nibbana are mere concepts which do not exist except in our minds and therefore do not have an independent flowing existence, actual change being the essential mark of distinction between a reality and a concept.

**Sumana** (interposed). But a sole reservation or exception has to be made in favour of Nibbana which is permanent, abiding and enduring.

**Agga.** You are a dualist. That is to say, you start with an assumption that there are two radically different kinds of realities, conditioned and unconditioned.

**Sumana.** I beg your pardon, Sir. Mine is not an assumption at all. I have based my views on the clear dictum of the Buddha. He said in the *Anguttara Nikaya* that 'there are two elements,

conditioned and unconditioned. The marks of conditioned are three. Which three? Genesis is apparent; dissolution is apparent; a state of duration other than genesis and dissolution is also apparent. Similarly, the three marks of unconditioned are: genesis, dissolution and duration are not apparent.'

**Agga.** You seem to think that these marks stick to things like the outlines of an object. Yet they, like the outlines of an object, are mere appearances to the mind. The word 'apparent' is the crux of this passage. The Pali word is *pannaya*ti from prefix *pa*, which is explained by *pakarena*—'in different aspects', and root *na*, 'to know'. It is quite legitimate for a monist to look upon the real as One, even as the truth is One, and to regard the Buddha as having spoken of it by the dual method from two view-points. To intellect from without the real appears in three different aspects. But to intuition from within these aspects *disappear* (*na-pannaya*ti). What is relative and conditioned to intellect becomes absolute and unconditioned to intuition. Our intellect divides the stationary track left behind the flowing reality and divides the immobile time passed over by it into a 'powder of moments' which we name nascent or genetic, static or durative and cessant or arrested. But intuition which follows the continuous flow from within the simple, indivisible reality dispenses with these time concepts. Consider a wave motion. You think that each wave is succeeded by another after under going the threefold process of beginning, lasting and subsiding. But what is it that moves on and on? Physicists will say force or energy. Now, if this force or energy be endowed with consciousness, it would feel itself as onward motion at every moment without interruption. It would not feel itself as now beginning, next fasting and then subsiding. An outside observer draws an imaginary line of break between the subsidence of a previous phase and the rising of a succeeding one and in doing so, he practically considers motion between any two such breaks as rest. In your view intellect and intuition are assumed not to differ in kind but in degrees but conditioned and unconditioned are held as radically different, whereas in my view intellect and intuition are held to be radically different as poles asunder but conditioned and unconditioned are treated as two different aspects of one reality.

Is it not, Sumana?

**Sumana.** Yes, Sir.

**Agga.** It is not an easy matter to decide which of these two views is correct, before we have a clear idea of what Nibbana is. But so far we have cleared our way for discussion on Nibbana. Now, Sumana, after all we have said on the distinction between a reality and a concept, do you still maintain that Nibbana is nothing but calm.?

**Sumana.** I do.

**Agga.** Pray, analyse your idea of calm.

**Sumana.** By calm I mean freedom from trouble or evil.

**Agga.** Then, calm is synonymous with the extinction of Ill. But if you go a step further in your analysis, you will find that this Ill is reduced to suffering or pain caused by desire. Therefore, your calm is the extinction of the fires of this desire.

**Sumana.** I own it, since Sariputta himself described Nibbana as extinction of corruptions.

**Agga.** I suppose you refer to the *Zambukhadaka Sutta* where the Arahant described Nibbana as extinction of lust, ill-will and ignorance.

**Sumana.** Yes, that is my authority.

**Agga.** Very well. If you read a little further on, you will find that Sariputta who lived face to face, i.e., in direct contact, with Nibbana described arahantship in identical terms. How now? Are the Nibbana and the Arahantship the same or different?

**Sumana.** Whether the same or different, Sir, what is the use of your splitting hairs in this matter?

**Agga.** But is it not good to know their identity or difference, Sumana?

**Sumana.** Well, Sir—the view of the *vitandavadins* is that arahant ship is so described because it comes into being after the extinction of corruptions. The consensus of opinion among the commentators, however, is that Nibbana is so described because corruptions are extinguished by it.

**Agga.** Which of these two views do you prefer? **Sumana.** Certainly the latter, Agga. The *vitandavadins* say that the arahantship is the result of the extinction of corruptions in the Path-moment, while the commentators refer to the Nibbana of the Path as the cause of the extinction of corruptions in arahantship; But what of the Nibbana of arahantship?

**Sumana.** I am rather perplexed over this question of yours.

**Agga.** Well, I must refer you to your own authority. Sariputta described this Nibbana as extinction of corruptions. But he also described arahantship in identical terms. Now, when a sane person describes two things in identical terms, must we not assume that the two things are really one and the same?

**Sumana.** Nay, that cannot be. When I describe an ass and a horse as animals I do not necessarily mean that the ass is the same as the horse.

**Agga.** Of course not. In your example you are simply bringing two different individuals under a higher concept. But you will not admit that extinction of corruptions is a higher concept than Nibbana.

**Sumana.** Assuredly not.

**Agga.** Sariputta first described Nibbana as extinction of corruptions. But Buddhaghosa clearly said (Yo kho avuso ragakkhayo 'ti adivacanato khayo nibbananti cc, na arahantassapi khayamattiapajjanato; tam pi hi yo kho avuso ragakkhayo' ti adinayena nidittham. *The Visuddhimagga*) that, lest this description should mislead any one to regard it as *mere* extinction, Sariputta again described the arahantship in the very same terms. It is, therefore, plain that he intended to show that the Nibbana he described was not a lip-Nibbana but a concrete real as

distinguished from an abstraction. Hence the expression, to wit, 'extinction of lust', 'extinction of ill-will', and 'extinction of nescience,' are but synonyms of the real Nibbana. I mean they merely denote the three different aspects of one and the same reality.

**Sumana.** I am not quite convinced.

**Agga.** Now, does the expression, 'extinction of lust' include the extinction of ill-will and of ignorance, or does the expression 'extinction of ill-will' include the extinction of lust and ignorance, or does the expression 'extinction of ignorance' include the other two?

**Sumana.** Decidedly not.

**Agga.** Then, in your view, there would be a multiplicity of Nibbanas, whereas Nibbana is an indivisible whole.

**Sumana.** But are there not a plurality of Nibbanas? There are four degrees of ariyanship. And since we are taught that a lower grade Ariyan does not know things of the higher grades, it follows that his Nibbana is different from those of the higher.

**Agga.** I do not deny the plurality of Nibbanas for different individuals, aye, even for each individual at different times. What I do deny is the plurality of them for each individual at *any one time*.

**Sumana.** Then is not the extinction of lust Nibbana?

**Agga.** Dhammapala says that *mere* extinction is not Nibbana. (Khayamattam na Nibbanam. *Saccasamkheba*.) If mere extinction of lust be Nibbana, even lower animals would have to be considered as having attained Nibbana on the subsidence of their sexual desire. Surely your Nibbana is too crude to be described.

**Sumana.** (curtly) I am not so vile as to identify Nibbana with the temporary absence of lust in lower animals. I meant the eradication, extirpation, extermination or extinction of lust.

**Agga.** Softly, good Sumana. Be not angry with me for having put to you what Buddhaghosa himself as in the *Sammohavinodani*, his commentary on the *Vibhanga*, would have asked his opponent worthy of his own steel. Philosophical discussion should not be a heated controversy, but it should be carried on in a cool and calm atmosphere.

**Sumana.** Prithee. good Sir, do not mind my temper. I wish I had shown a good temper after losing a bad one.

**Agga.** You say you have meant the eradication of lust. You acknowledge, do you not, that there is such a thing as what Buddhists call 'adoptive intellect' (*gotrabhu-nana*) having Nibbana for its object. Now we are told that corruptions neither had been eradicated before, nor are being eradicated at that moment. And if Nibbana be extinction of corruptions, how can this intellect in question have the extinction of corruptions as its object before their eradication?

**Sumana.** Of course, Nibbana at that moment exists only as an idea of the future extinction of corruptions in the mind of the 'adopted' person.

**Agga.** Then his is merely an idea-Nibbana which is a concept.

**Sumana.** Nevertheless, Nibbana, I mean the real Nibbana, is the extinction of corruptions by the Path-intuition at the moment next after the 'adoptive' intellect.

**Agga.** Now, please to answer my questions carefully. Have corruptions already expired or are they being extinguished at that moment? Or are there any corruptions at that moment to be put away later?

**Sumana.** Well—corruptions are undergoing the process of extinction at the moment of the Path-intuition.

**Agga.** How can the Path-intuition which, according to you, is in the act of extinguishing corruptions have the extinction of them as its object? The fact is Sumana, corruptions cannot coexist with intuition, even as darkness cannot exist side by side with light.

**Sumana.** That is precisely what I meant. Just as light dispels darkness, so intuition removes corruptions.

**Agga.** You should not press this analogy too far. I will give you another illustration. If you cut down a tree from which fruits have been gathered, do you destroy the past year's fruits which have been long enjoyed or the present year's fruits which have been gathered or the future year's fruits which have as yet to be borne?

**Sumana.** I do not destroy any fruits at all but only the tree. **Agga.** But the tree is the cause of future fruits. Therefore, intuition does not destroy the past or present corruptions but only the root-cause of future corruptions.

**Sumana.** That, I admit. This root-cause is desire (*tanha*) and if it be removed, its evil effects would be destroyed. Therefore, the extinction of desire is synonymous with that of evils.

**Agga.** A synonym is but a name.

**Sumana.** But it is the name of the real Nibbana.

**Agga.** We have as yet to determine the nature of that reality, the several synonyms of Nibbana merely expressing the various qualities of it.

**Sumana.** But is not a reality determined by its own qualities as a white paper is determined by its whiteness, etc.?

**Agga.** A quality is that which is abstracted by the mind from a reality, like whiteness mentally abstracted from paper.

**Sumana.** But whiteness is a colour which is a reality.

**Agga.** Yes, it is treated as a reality distinct from sound, etc., according to Buddhist analysis. But as whiteness cannot exist apart from paper or other like objects, analysis is merely logical. Hence I say your abstract qualities of Nibbana cannot exist by themselves.

**Sumana.** But does not health exist in this world?

**Agga.** When a disease is cured, health ensues. But this health is not mere lip-health or paper health.

**Sumana.** Therefore I say that health is real.

**Agga.** You do not see my point, **Sumana.** Let me give you a very common illustration. When a sick child who dreads medicine tells his mother that he is well, his health is lip-health. Or again, when a physician tells his patient under treatment that he is all right, the patient's health is but lip-health in the mouth of the physician. There is a Burmese saying; 'According to the physician it matters not, only the patient cannot bear'. Health apart from sound body is therefore, merely an idea, notion or concept. To be real, it must be bound up with sound body. So any Nibbanic quality, say, your calm, to be real, must be bound up with sound *khandhas*. For this reason the author of the *Visuddhimaggatika* says; Nibbana also is even again bound up with *khandhas*. (Nibbanampi khandhapatibaddhameva.)

**Sumana.** The expression 'bound up with body' (*kayapatibaddha*) is applied to garments. Here garment is not body and body not garment. Hence Nibbana cannot be *khandhas*.

**Agga.** You have missed the force of the prefix *pati*—'again' in the expression *patibaddha*. A garment is actually worn or can be reworn on body. Otherwise it would become a torn cloth. Just as body is indispensable to garment, so are *Khandhas* to Nibbana. This view is confirmed by a Buddhist writer as follows:— 'Indeed, because Nibbana is conceived in dependence upon *khandhas* it is made known even through our body". (Nibbanampi hi khandhe paticca pannapanato sariram yeva pannapesi Saratthadipani.)

**Sumana.** I cannot assent to your proposition. The expression 'bound up with *khandhas*' should be interpreted to mean 'spoken of in connection with *khandhas*', because we say that 'Nibbana is a cessation of *khandhas*'.

**Agga.** Pardon me, friend, if I call this a piece of pure sophistry. Why? Because a worse quibble I have not heard.

If I were to say that disease is body-bound, you would admit that body coexists with disease. But when I say that health is body-bound, you reply that health is merely spoken of in connection with body as though it were, in reality, the destruction of body itself.

**Sumana.** Did not Buddhaghosa, say: 'Matter and mind make up the five *khandhas* which constitute the reality of Ill: the previous desire which produces Ill is the reality of its root-cause; and

the non-occurrence of both constitutes the reality of the cessation of Ill.' ? ( Rупarupam pancakhandham; tam hoti dukkhasaccam; tam samutthapika purimatanha: samudayasccam; ubhinnaṃ apavatti nirodhasaccam. *Sammohavinodani*

**Agga.** The crux of this passage lies in the expression 'previous desire'. Ill proper (*dukkha-dukkha*) is the sensation of pain (*dukkha vedana*) i.e., pain felt by sentient beings. There is no such thing as positive pleasure in this world. It is but the negation of pain as cold is the negation of heat in science. We call this relative pleasure 'pain reversed' (*viparinama-dukkha*). Mental indifference to pain and pleasure is hedonic neutrality (*upekkha-vedana*). But just as there is heat in hot cold or Lukewarm water, every feeling, bodily or mental, is reducible to pain. Matter cannot feel this pain. Moreover, it is neither good nor bad. Yet it is described as Ill in the universal proposition :—'All things in the making are ill.' This ill in matter is often called the evils of evolution (*sankhara-dukkha*). But we agree with your master that they are described as ill because they are instrumental in giving pain to sentient beings who are still imbued with desire. One is pained when he does not get what he desires or gets what he does not desire. The word Ill in this connection is used in the sense of fearful or dangerous (*bhayatthena dukkha*, as when we speak of a deadly or dangerous weapon. But they cause no harm to anyone where desire is not.

**Sumana.** What! Does not a dangerous weapon cause pain against the sufferer's desire?

**Agga.** But pain is caused by the desire on the part of a person who uses a dangerous weapon, just as barbarous Huns are instigated by desire to cause harm to humanity. Thus, whatever ill there is in this world is traced to this real culprit desire. Convict him by all means and you may even condemn the contaminated khandhas even as you would condemn a diseased tissue or body. But when the disease is cured, why condemn the sound body? Your condemnation of all *khandhas*, good or bad, reminds me of those erring *rishis* of old who detested body and mortified it or who detested mind and stifled it. Only, you are a degree worse than either because you combine the evils of both and seek your own annihilation.

**Sumana.** But is not your sane mind in sound body equally subject to change as unsound mind in diseased body?

**Agga.** Yes, it is.

**Sumana.** Then what is changeful is bad ( Yam aniccam tam dukkham) and is, therefore, a thing, to be got rid of.

**Agga.** I have already told you that Ill is due to desire. What is changeful would be bad when it is due to desire. But the change in itself being but a characteristic mark of all realities is not bad.

**Sumana.** I do not approve of your statement that change is not bad and your implication that Nibbana is changing.

**Agga.** Dead bodies do not move. Therefore, change is but the sign of health or life. Nibbana is described as *amata* or *accuta* the deathless. The Pali *amata* corresponds to Sanskrit *amrita* or



European word ambrosia, all of which mean 'deathless'. Hence all realities, including Nibbana, are in a continual flux'. (Nadi soto viya)

If you look at this flow from outside, as we average people do with intellect, the change appears to be a succession of solidified or congealed states. But if you look into it. i.e., view it from within, as Ariyans do with intuition, the same change presents itself as a continuous motion as in the wave illustration which I adduced. For this reason, Buddhaghosa says: 'The one body of the Buddha is not subject to change.'( Eko Buddhassa rupakayo viparinamato natthi. *Visuddhimagga.*)

You see from this quotation how radically different is intuition from intellect. What is regarded by intellect as changeful (*viparinama dhamma*) is regarded by intuition as unchangeable (*aviparinama-dhamma*).

Similarly with other contrasts, such as, relative (*sapaccaya*) and absolute (*apaccaya*). In this way you should understand the words unborn (*ajata*), unmade (*akata*), unmanifest (*abhuta*) and unconditioned (*asankhata*) in the language of the *Udana* from the inward point of view.

The monistic view which I now advocate has the advantage over the dualistic in that it is able to reconcile many apparent contradictions in scriptures without twisting the meanings of words. For example, all realities are, doubtless, caused. The denial of this fact would land us in the heresy of chance (*ahetuka-ditthi*). Therefore, Nibbana is caused, but it may be said to be uncaused in so far as Ariyans are concerned because they do not consider the aspect of causation while intuiting Nibbana. Again, for us who can only observe from without, Nibbana must be present in time. And yet Ariyans intuit it as out of time (*kalavimutta*) because they simply abide in their own intuition (*pativijjha viharati.*) without reference to time concepts.

**Sumana.** Do you mean to say that the same mind and body which are conditioned when observed from without become unconditioned when intuited from within?

**Agga.** In one sense. Yes. Because if you were a contemporary observer of an Arahant from outside, you would not be able to discriminate between his personality and those of non-Arahants. We hear of Arahants and non-Arahants being mistaken, one for the other. But the Arahant himself would see his personality from within as unconditioned. If you say he sees exactly as we do, you are simply transferring your frail mind to him.

In another sense, I would reply No. For if you were to follow the history of that individual Arahant, his previous conditioned personality could not possibly be identical with unconditioned personality after arahantship was attained, since at no two consecutive moments is any reality the same.

**Sumana.** Then in your view, the world (*sankhara*) would be Nibbana.

**Agga.** What think you of the following passage?

'A well-trained practitioner having a good view of the waxing and waning of conditioned things directly faces Nibbana ( Samma patipanno sankharanam udayabayam sampassamano nibbanam sacchikaroti. *Mindapanha.*)'

**Sumana.** Those who clearly see the growth and decay of conditioned reality attain to the second Insight called *Udayabbaya-nana* and this leads by successive insights to the Path-intuition which has Nibbana for its object.

**Agga.** I agree. Those who attain the second Insight still discern the flowing process from outside and therefore see the reality as conditioned. This insight is often mistaken for intuition. The latter is a 'good view' of the same process of flowing from inside. Those who thus see the reality from within as unconditioned are in direct contact with Nibbana. Thus a wrong view of the real gives rise to Sankhara; a correct view (Sammaditthi), Nibbana.

**Sumana.** I very much doubt the correctness of your interpretation.

**Agga.** Can mind attend to two objects at the same time?

**Sumana.** Doubtless not.

**Agga.** Then how can a practitioner have a good view of conditioned things and at the same time directly face the unconditioned, unless both conditioned and unconditioned are merged in one flowing reality? Therefore, what I do maintain is that conditioned or unconditioned reality is our own personality respectively with or without corruptions, the only differentia being the quality of the extinction of corruptions.

**Sumana.** How can personality be Nibbana?

**Agga.** The Buddha said: 'Even in this sentient, conscious body which is but a fathom in measure I declare this world, its cause, its cessation and the path thereto' ( Imasmim yeva kalevare byamamatte samanake savinnanake lokanceva pannapemi lokasamudayanceva lokanirodhanca lokanirodhagaminipadanca. *Sagatha-Vagga-Samyutta.*)

Here the reality is analysed into four different aspects. But it is plain that you should not look for Nibbana outside your own system. It is not something already existing before you attain it.

Neither is it a locality which awaits your arrival as Nagasena in *Milindapanha* pointed out, by an example of fire produced by the friction of two pieces of wood, that there is no space in which Nibbana that exists like a fire so produced is inherent (nissitokaso or nikkhitokaso). This fire example however clearly shows that there must be a *locus* when the fire is produced. And that locus for Nibbana is no other than our own personality purged from corruptions.

**Sumana.** But did not the Buddha say that Nibbana is external to us (bahiddha-dhammo).?

**Agga.** Ah! Yes, because it is now outside us who have not yet attained it." (Sabbasnkharato bahibhutam nibbanam. *Uparipannasa tika.*) But did not the Buddha himself equally say that the

deathless element free from *upadhis* (of kamma, kilesa, khandha and kamma) is in direct contact with our own system?' (Kayena amatam dhatum phusitva nirupadhim. *Itivuttaka*. ) Again in the *Canki Sutta* of the *Majjhimanipanna* the Buddha said that one is in direct contact with Nibbana at the same time he intuitively feels it.' ( Kayena c'eva paramam saccam sacchikaroti pannaya ca tam pativijjha passati. *Majjhimanipanna*.) This passage alone is sufficient to prove that when one abides in an intuition (pativijjha viharati as Buddhaghosa said in the *Atthasalini*), i.e., when one enters Nibbana by penetrative wisdom, Nibbana as an object of intuition can no longer be external to him who is within it. To a Nibbanic being there is no division as external or internal (*abheda*)!. The dual classification, in fact all classification, is meant for us who have not yet attained intuition and therefore view realities from outside. Do you agree or do you not?

*Nana*. I admit the absence of any distinction whatsoever in Nibbana. But Nibbana is defined by Buddhaghosa in *Sammohavinodani* as that in which the rounds of evils (*rodha*) cease to exist.

**Agga**. Yes. But it clearly shows that Nibbana or Nirodha is not *mere* cessation. It is the locus (not the locality) where evils cease. And this locus is no other than personality purged from corruptions.

**Sumana**. How will you reconcile this view of yours with the usual explanation of the word cessation (*nirrodha*) by 'not becoming' (*anuppadana*)?

**Agga**. From the tree illustration you will remember that the cessation is that of future corruptions. But it is not *mere* unbecoming of future corruptions, for there must be a locus in the form of our personality wherein future corruptions arise no more.

**Sumana**. I admit that what you have said about Nibbana being our personality relates to the *Sa-upadisesa* Nibbana. But I still maintain that there is no becoming whatsoever in the *An-upadisesa* Nibbana where no residual stuff of life is said to remain.

**Agga**. All authorities are agreed that both forms of Nibbana are but two aspects (*pariyayas*, as they appear to us, of one real Nibbana as it is lived by an Arahant. But let us try to clearly understand what is meant by *upadi*.

This word is often confused with *upadhi*. The latter is derived from *upa* and root *dha*—'to bear, conduct or carry' and is applied to four things, namely, corruptions, sensual desires, aggregates (*khandhas*) and kamma as we have seen above. There are passages as in the *Mahaniddesa* in which Nibbana is described as the *locus* in which all *upadhis* have been given up". (*Sabbupadhinisagga* ..... Nibbanam.) In the *Sagathavagga Samyutta* the Brahma who has attained Nibbana is described as a *nirupadhi*. ( *Brahmano parinibbuto* ..... *nirupadhi*.) So also in *Majjhima-panna*'. (*Sitibhutam nirupadhim* ,,,,,, *dhira*, tam *brumi brahmanam*.) As *upadhi* includes *khandhas* an arahant who is a *nirupadhi* must be free from unsound *khandhas*.

**Sumana**. I beg your pardon. The word *upadhi* in '*nirupadhi*' as applied to an arahant must be confined to *kilesupadhi*. Or if you want to extend it to *khandhupadhi* also, you may do so only by anticipation i.e. you call an arahant a *nirupadhi* by anticipation since he is sure to give up the *upadhi* of *khandhas* soon on attainment of the *Anupadisesa* Nibbana.

**Agga.** Let that be for a moment. But upadhi is derived from *upa* and the verb *adiyati*—'to be grasped' and means the five khandhas grasped at by four upadanas. (Catuhi upadanehi upadiyatiti upadi, pancupadanakkhandha. *Abhidhammatthasangaha-tika*.) Now there is a school of thought in Burma which holds that our khandhas are upadanakkhandhas with reference to us mortals who are not yet free from upadana but they are mere khandhas with reference to the Buddha and Arahants who are free. According to this school the same set of khandhas appear differently to the two sets of viewers. But the orthodox view according to the *Dhammasangani* is that the worldly mind and material body alone are upadaniya and the transcendent, spiritual consciousness which is beyond the reach of upadanas is anupadaniya. If the upadaniya corresponds to the upadanakkhandhas, as held by your master, it follows that the anupadaniya, namely the transcendent consciousness, obtains in the Anupadisesa Nibbana.

And yet ninety-nine *per cent*, of Burman Buddhists, however, understand this word upadi to mean all kinds of *khandhas*. But let us hear Buddhaghosa who writes:-

'The *Anupadisesa* Nibbana is so-called because of the non-becoming of the five khandhas which have been 'grasped at' as effects by the *kamma* attended by desire, pride and error. (Upadinnakanam pancannam khandhanam apavattivasena anupadisesanibbanam kathitam. *Commentary on Sagathovagga Samyutta*.)

It is therefore, clear that only the *upadinnaka khandhas* cease to exist in the *Anupadisesa* Nibbana. Transcendental consciousness (*Lokuttara citta*) not being born of such a *kamma*, cannot be said to be *upadinnaka*. Hence we may conclude that the *anupadinnaka khandhas*, to wit, the fruitional consciousness of arahantship obtains in the *Anupadisesa* Nibbana as in the *Saupadisesa*.

Hence Buddhaghosa's dictum that by Nibbana is meant the fruitional consciousness of an Arahant. (Idha (nibbanam) arahattaphalam adhippetam tampi hi .....nibbanan ti. *Khuddaka Patha-atthakatha*.)

**Sumana.** Against Buddhaghosa we may oppose the Buddha himself who said:—

'Here, i. e. in this Nibbana, both mind and matter cease without a residuum. (Ettha rupanca namanca asesam uparujjhanti. *Digha Nikaya*.)

**Agga.** You read the Buddha's word literally. But Buddhaghosa knew better than you or I how to interpret the Buddha's language and thought correctly. If you cannot reconcile the two, you have only yourself to blame. The trend of your argument reminds me of the recent controversy on the subject of water elephant. Suppose a naturalist were to tell you that there is no elephant in water and suppose that his pupil tells you that by elephant his master meant land elephant, would you be justified in your conclusion that there is no water elephant?

**Sumana.** Assuredly not.

**Agga.** Then why conclude that there are no *anupadinnaka khandhas* in Nibbana when Buddhaghosa tells us that by mind and matter in this connection the Buddha meant the *upadinnaka khandhas*? Many persons who have never even dreamt of the existence of water elephants deny their

existence. A few persons possess dried specimens of this miniature water creature which, in all its appearance is a quadruped with well formed tusks and trunk. The former distrust their senses and cry 'A faked one!' On examining the anatomy of this little animal under a microscope, it is found to be a true structure even as specimens of paleontological flora and fauna preserved in rocks and earth. Would you still doubt the existence of this genus of the little animal?

**Sumana.** Certainly not. But it cannot be the same kind of elephant which we know on land.

**Agga.** Quite so. In the same way the *anupadinnaka khandhas* can not possibly be the same as the *upadinnaka*.

**Sumana.** If the *anupadinnaka khandhas* obtain in Nibbana, why did some authorities speak of the complete cessation of *khandhas* (Khandha parinibbana) at Kusinara?

**Agga.** If Buddhaghosa's interpretation of the Buddha's word be correct only the *upadinnaka khandhas* cease on finally passing away from the world. Just as an event which we call death (*sammuti-marana*) does not interrupt the natural flow of the reality of life in this world, so the final death (*pacchima-cuti*) of an Arahant does not interrupt the flow of the reality of Nibbana from the *Saupadisea* to the *Anupadisesa* form.

**Sumana.** Then you mean that the fruitional consciousness of an Arahant survives after finally passing away from this world?

**Agga.** Yes. It is the survival of the fittest flowing on and on with out interruption, any break in its continuity being but an invention of our intellect.

**Sumana.** In that case this surviving consciousness would be *Nama*.

**Agga.** Yes. Buddhaghosa says: *Namadhammas* include four mental khandhas as well as Nibbana. (*Namadhammati cattaro arupino khandha ca nibbananca. Commentary on Mula-Ya-maka.*)

**Sumana.** Is it not that four immaterial khandhas are called *Nama* because it bends (*nameti*) the mind to it and that Nibbana is also called *Nama* because (spiritual) mind tends (*namiyati*) to it.

**Agga.** This grammatical distinction is due to your view of the mind as subject and of Nibbana as object. But the latter cannot be an object without a subject. The fact is that the subject and the object are merged in an intuition. This follows from Buddhaghosa's dictum that Nibbana is the fruitional consciousness itself. Nibbana is not *thought* but *lived*. Else Nibbana would be merely lip-bliss.

**Sumana.** Am I to understand you to say that individuals exist in Nibbana.?

**Agga.** It all depends upon what you mean by 'individual'. If you mean a soul in the sense in which it is generally understood in the West, I would reply No, because the ego idea is but a concept. But if you use the word as a mere label for realities, I would say Yes. Sariputta was a distinct individual from Moggallana on this side of the veil. Why should not their continuations be individually distinct on the other side?

Each lives his own Nibbana. (Paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi.) But it does not follow that they draw a line of demarcation between *meum* and *tuum* on the other side any more than they do on this side.

**Sumana.** I cannot agree to individual existence in Nibbana.

**Agga.** Sumana, you are a good controversialist. What do you make of the orthodox question whether the *Khandhas* are one thing, Nibbana another and the soul a third; and the heterodox negative reply in *Kathavattu*?

**Sumana.** I return your compliments. We must go a little way back in order to understand the controverted point.

**Agga.** Right.

**Sumana.** The believer in the soul committed himself to an opinion that the soul is neither conditioned nor unconditioned. The orthodox adherent pointed out that the Buddha taught only two things—conditioned and unconditioned—but not a third.

**Agga.** I would say two aspects instead of two things. But be pleased to proceed with your own explanation.

**Sumana.** Then the orthodox questioned whether *khandhas* are conditioned and Nibbana unconditioned. The heterodox reply was in the affirmative. Finally, the question you have referred to was put. And the opponent was cornered and obliged to negative his position that the soul is a third class of things neither conditioned nor unconditioned since it is but a metaphysical abstraction not having a distinct, independent existence like realities mentioned. He thereby confirms the distinction between conditioned *khandhas* and unconditioned Nibbana.

**Agga.** A very plausible explanation. But the final question and answer on analysis resolve themselves into:—

Are *Khandhas* and Nibbana different? No.

Are *Khandhas* and soul different? No.

Are Nibbana and soul different? No.

You would like to answer the first of these sub-questions in the affirmative because of your conviction that *Khandhas* and Nibbana are radically different. But you are called in not to alter the form of the answer but only to interpret it. As the soul is but a metaphysical abstraction as you have pointed out, there are only two terms left to be compared. And their difference is negated because a conditioned and unconditioned are but two aspects of one and the same reality.

**Sumana.** I cannot accept your explanation.

**Agga.** What think you of another conversation between the orthodox and his opponent relating to the existence or non-existence of an individual in Nibbana? When asked whether persons (puggalas) who have attained Nibbana exist therein or not, the first heterodox reply was in the affirmative. But when pressed with the further question whether such a person is a permanent soul, the reply was in the negative. Then the opponent shifted his ground and changed his first affirmative answer to negative, But when again pressed with the question whether such a person was annihilated, he was equally compelled to negate annihilation.

**Sumana.** The opponent was on the horns of dilemma because of his belief in the soul which is really non-existent.

**Agga.** The dilemma is quite independent of the question of soul. If you believe that realities are perduring or abiding without change, you would equally commit yourself to the heresy of eternalism. If, on the other hand, you say that they are annihilated, you would equally adopt the opposite heresy of annihilation. To escape the horns you must say that realities are in a continuous flow.

**Sumana.** In the case of realities not surviving the final death, there can be no question of these two heresies because it is only in respect to the soul (atta) that these heresies obtain.

**Agga.** But how can a person who believes in the theory of immortal soul possibly commit himself again to the opposite theory of its annihilation? By *atta* is meant permanent self corresponding to the immortal soul of Europeans. Therefore in our view the *attavada* is identical with the *sassata-ditthi* to which is opposed the *uccheda-ditthi*. Hence the latter view is impossible in respect to *atta*.

Again if your views be correct, the opponent having answered that a permanent soul does not exist in Nibbana, there would be no necessity on the part of the orthodox for the further question whether such a nonexistent soul is annihilated.

**Sumana.** I forgot. The second question in the *Kathavatthu*, viz., Is a person who has attained Nibbana annihilated?, was asked by the heterodox believer in the theory of immortal soul.

**Agga.** Admitting for argument sake that it was the heterodox question, the orthodox negative reply would rather confirm the view that such a person is not annihilated.

**Sumana.** The orthodox negated the annihilation of a person because Person does not exist at all, except as a concept, to be annihilated.

**Agga.** Plausible. But for reasons already given, that is not the traditional view. According to able translators of Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Kathavatthu*, both questions were asked by the orthodox; and they are logical, for when the heterodox replied that the Nibbanic being is not immortal, it was perfectly legitimate for the orthodox to press his opponent with the further question as to annihilation, as explained by me above.

**Sumana.** Let that be. But the answers of the opponent are not of much value.

**Agga.** Then let us reverse the position by attending to the Buddha's own answers to King Kosala's questions in the *Samyutta* respecting the existence of individual beings in Nibbana.

The first pair of his answers was: 'Neither do I declare that such a being is existent nor do I declare that he is non-existent.' The Buddha indulged in this apparent paradox in order to avoid the two extreme views of eternalism and annihilation. But if there were no such a being at all in Nibbana, what necessity was there for the Buddha to re-affirm his existence?

**Sumana.** But did not the Buddha tell the King that such a Nibbanic being is altogether freed from mind and body?

**Agga.** Assuredly not. He said that such a being is free or freed from *concepts* of mind and matter (*rupasankha-vimutto. . . vinnanasankhvimutto*) instead of saying free from mind and matter (*rupa-vimutto ... vinnana-vimutto*). He further told the King that such a Nibbanic being is deep like an ocean and is difficult to understand. But this remark is intended for all who cannot avoid concepts. The author of the *Netti* used the word *sankhaye* (in extinction) instead of *sankha* (from concepts). This makes all the difference in the world. He regards the Nibbanic being as free in the extinction of colour, sound, odour, taste, touch and knowability (*Cupasankhaye vimutto..... dhammasankhaye vimutto*). In this view the Nibbanic being is a colourless, soundless, odourless, tasteless, intangible and unknowable being. How can Nibbana which is included in the cognizable objects (*dhammayatana*) be realised in the extinction of *dhammarammanas*? Free from what? If you take Nibbana as an object of transcendental consciousness, it would be a manifest contradiction to say that it is extinct as such. But if you take it to be a subject identical with the fruitional consciousness of an Arahant, how can it subsist without an object? I have more than once repeated that the subject and the object are merged in one reality, Nibbana, which is simply *lived* without a thought of any of its aspects which would strike an outside observer.

**Sumana.** I understand you to hold that the mental *khandhas* obtain in Nibbana. But did not some writers say that it is emancipated from *khandhas* (*khandha-nissato*)?

**Agga.** The *Compendium* has *khandha-sangaha-nissata*, literally 'Freed from the *reckoning* of *khandhas*'. You should understand it in the sense of freedom from the *upadinnaka*, *-khandhas* or in that of freedom from concepts of *khandhas*.

**Sumana.** But did not the Buddha say in the *Udana* that there is no earth, no water, no fire, no air, no sun, no moon, etc., in Nibbana?

**Agga.** Yes, because there are no concepts of all these objects to a Nibbanic being.

**Sumana.** Will you now summarise your position?

**Agga.** The Nibbana of a being is his own mind purged from corruptions. It forms no exception to the law of reality. That is, it is a continuous flowing existence. Though the Nibbana of yesterday is not that of today, Nibbana is spoken of as permanent (*i. e. sassate or dhuvva*) in the sense that once attained it never reverts to a worldly state. These two words are not to be understood in the sense in which they are used by the heterodox believers to designate a permanent abiding soul. They must be



understood rather in the sense in which modern statesmen use the word 'permanent' when they speak of permanent peace as one that will never be again disturbed by a state of war.

**Sumana.** Granted that there is such a purified spiritual mind in Nibbana. Would you allow the existence of body also therein.?

**Agga.** We know that transcendental consciousness is always associated with body. But we are taught to believe also that mind can exist independently of body in the *Arupa* world and that the arahant exists also in that world. It is difficult to decide whether the Arahants develop their spiritual bodies as well as on the other side of the veil. The author of the *Anutika* says that Nibbana is something like subtle matter? (Nibbanam pana sukhuma-rupa-gatikam.) Whether he refers to the spiritual substance of mind or body is not clear. At this stage of our discussion I would hand over the argument to my friend from Henzada as his master held that there is unique body as well in Nibbana.

**Teja.** Yes, my master cited the *Sutta of the Tiloka-Cakravatti* in support of his contention. The Buddha told us that when he was that universal monarch he built mansions and invited the previous Buddhas and Arahants from Nibbana and that their doubles (*nimmita-rupas*) came.

**Sunmana.** How do you know that these were not the mental creations of the King himself?

**Teja.** Because they are said to have conversed on philosophy (abhidhamma) which the King at that time did not understand. If they were his own creations, they would not be able to go beyond his mind. That is, he could not possibly suggest philosophical ideas which were not in his mind. Hence we must assume that the real Buddhas and Arahants who were ever living their own flowing Nibbanas, created their own doubles just as the Buddha himself in his lifetime in this world is said to have created a double for preaching philosophy to the gods in the Tavatimsa heaven during his temporary absence on earth.

**Sumana.** Supposing they were living as pure spiritual minds, could they not materialise bodies for such occasions?

**Teja.** Possible.

**Sumana.** There is some difficulty in the supposition that Nibbanic beings ever associate themselves with the concerns of this world. U Agga has told us that a Nibbanic being consists of the fruitional consciousness of the highest Ariyanship solely occupied with its own tranquillity, calm or peace as its object. How would it be possible for such a self-absorbed being to hear the appeals of Tiloka from this earth?. Or if he be supposed to be endowed with supernatural powers to know the wishes of worldly people, as by telepathy, his Nibbanic flow would be interrupted.

**Teja.** The time of such interruption would be so short as to be negligible. In any case such interruption, if any would be no more than that of the Saupadisesa by *Kiriya-cittas*, (non-effective thoughts).

**Agga.** Even assuming that a Nibbanic being cannot or will not think of this world, it does not invalidate my argument for spiritual existence in Nibbana.

**Tissa.** I have taken very little active part in this lively discussion. But methinks the moon-lit hills of Sagaing are illumined with greater radiance and lustre to-night even as the beauty and brilliancy of the moon-lit groves of Gosing was enhanced by the righteous discourse on philosophy between the Great Moggallana and another.

**Teja.** I have also been, more or less, a listener. These hills, secluded from the noisy bustle of the world, seem to me to resound with a sweet resonance which will produce reverberating echoes throughout the length and breadth of the country, aye, the whole of the Buddhist world.

**Agga.** It augurs well that both of you appreciate our friendly exchange of views and I have no misgivings that something good will come of our meeting on this auspicious occasion. Sumana, I am very pleased to have an opportunity of discussing with you the question of questions. A problem, rationally approached, is on its fair way to proper solution. I trust that you will hear the message of Nibbana to the world. Brethren, the night has far advanced and it is time for us to retire. Good night to all.

**Agga.** Then why conclude that there are no *anupadinnaka khandhas* in Nibbana when Buddhaghosa tells us that by mind and matter in this connection the Buddha meant the *upadinnaka khandhas*? Many persons who have never even dreamt of the existence of water elephants deny their existence. A few persons possess dried specimens of this miniature water creature which, in all its appearance is a quadruped with well formed tusks and trunk. The former distrust their senses and cry 'A faked one!' On examining the anatomy of this little animal under a microscope, it is found to be a true structure even as specimens of paleontological flora and fauna preserved in rocks and earth. Would you still doubt the existence of this genus of the little animal?

**Sumana.** Certainly not. But it cannot be the same kind of elephant which we know on land.

**Agga.** Quite so. In the same way the *anupadinnaka khandhas* can not possibly be the same as the *upadinnaka*.

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**Agga.** I would say two aspects instead of two things. But be pleased to proceed with your own explanation.

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**Agga.** A very plausible explanation. But the final question and answer on analysis resolve themselves into:—

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**Agga.** Admitting for argument sake that it was the heterodox question, the orthodox negative reply would rather confirm the view that such a person is not annihilated.

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**Agga.** Then let us reverse the position by attending to the Buddha's own answers to King Kosala's questions in the *Samyutta* respecting the existence of individual beings in Nibbana.

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**Sumana.** But did not the Buddha tell the King that such a Nibbanic being is altogether freed from mind and body?

**Agga.** Assuredly not. He said that such a being is free or freed from *concepts* of mind and matter (*rupasankha-vimutto*. . . *vinnanasankhvimutto*) instead of saying free from mind and matter (*rupa-vimutto* ... *vinnana-vimutto*). He further told the King that such a Nibbanic being is deep like an ocean and is difficult to understand. But this remark is intended for all who cannot avoid concepts. The author of the *Netti* used the word *sankhaye* (in extinction) instead of *sankha* (from concepts). This makes all the difference in the world. He regards the Nibbanic being as free in the extinction of colour, sound, odour, taste, touch and knowability *Cupasankhaye vimutto*..... *dharmasankhaye vimutto*). In this view the Nibbanic being is a colourless, soundless, odourless, tasteless, intangible and unknowable being. How can Nibbana which is included in the cognizable objects (*dhammayatana*) be realised in the extinction of *dhammarammanas*? Free from what? If you take Nibbana as an object of transcendental consciousness, it would be a manifest contradiction to say that it is extinct as such. But if you take it to be a subject identical with the fruitional consciousness of an Arahant, how can it subsist without an object? I have more than once repeated that the subject

and the object are merged in one reality, Nibbana, which is simply *lived* without a thought of any of its aspects which would strike an outside observer.

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**Agga.** The *Compendium* has *khandha-sangaha-nissata*, literally 'Freed from the *reckoning* of *khandhas*'. You should understand it in the sense of freedom from the *upadinnaka*, *-khandhas* or in that of freedom from concepts of *khandhas*.

**Sumana.** But did not the Buddha say in the *Udana* that there is no earth, no water, no fire, no air, no sun, no moon, etc., in Nibbana?

**Agga.** Yes, because there are no concepts of all these objects to a Nibbanic being.

**Sumana.** Will you now summarise your position?

**Agga.** The Nibbana of a being is his own mind purged from corruptions. It forms no exception to the law of reality. That is, it is a continuous flowing existence. Though the Nibbana of yesterday is not that of today, Nibbana is spoken of as permanent (*i. e. sassate or dhuva*) in the sense that once attained it never reverts to a worldly state. These two words are not to be understood in the sense in which they are used by the heterodox believers to designate a permanent abiding soul. They must be understood rather in the sense in which modern statesmen use the word 'permanent' when they speak of permanent peace as one that will never be again disturbed by a state of war.

**Sumana.** Granted that there is such a purified spiritual mind in Nibbana. Would you allow the existence of body also therein.?

**Agga.** We know that transcendental consciousness is always associated with body. But we are taught to believe also that mind can exist independently of body in the *Arupa* world and that the arahant exists also in that world. It is difficult to decide whether the Arahants develop their spiritual bodies as well as on the other side of the veil. The author of the *Anutika* says that Nibbana is something like subtle matter? (Nibbanam pana sukhuma-rupa-gatikam.) Whether he refers to the spiritual substance of mind or body is not clear. At this stage of our discussion I would hand over the argument to my friend from Henzada as his master held that there is unique body as well in Nibbana.

**Teja.** Yes, my master cited the *Sutta of the Tiloka-Cakravatti* in support of his contention. The Buddha told us that when he was that universal monarch he built mansions and invited the previous Buddhas and Arahants from Nibbana and that their doubles (*nimmita-rupas*) came.

**Sunmana.** How do you know that these were not the mental creations of the King himself?

**Teja.** Because they are said to have conversed on philosophy (*abhidhamma*) which the King at that time did not understand. If they were his own creations, they would not be able to go beyond his mind. That is, he could not possibly suggest philosophical ideas which were not in his mind. Hence we must assume that the real Buddhas and Arahants who were ever living their own flowing

Nibbanas, created their own doubles just as the Buddha himself in his lifetime in this world is said to have created a double for preaching philosophy to the gods in the Tavatimsa heaven during his temporary absence on earth.

**Sumana.** Supposing they were living as pure spiritual minds, could they not materialise bodies for such occasions?

**Teja.** Possible.

**Sumana.** There is some difficulty in the supposition that Nibbanic beings ever associate themselves with the concerns of this world. U Agga has told us that a Nibbanic being consists of the fruitional consciousness of the highest Ariyanship solely occupied with its own tranquillity, calm or peace as its object. How would it be possible for such a self-absorbed being to hear the appeals of Tiloka from this earth?. Or if he be supposed to be endowed with supernormal powers to know the wishes of worldly people, as by telepathy, his Nibbanic flow would be interrupted.

**Teja.** The time of such interruption would be so short as to be negligible. In any case such interruption, if any would be no more than that of the Saupadisesa by *Kiriya-cittas*, (non-effective thoughts).

**Agga.** Even assuming that a Nibbanic being cannot or will not think of this world, it does not invalidate my argument for spiritual existence in Nibbana.

**Tissa.** I have taken very little active part in this lively discussion. But methinks the moon-lit hills of Sagaing are illumined with greater radiance and lustre to-night even as the beauty and brilliancy of the moon-lit groves of Gosing was enhanced by the righteous discourse on philosophy between the Great Moggallana and another.

**Teja.** I have also been, more or less, a listener. These hills, secluded from the noisy bustle of the world, seem to me to resound with a sweet resonance which will produce reverberating echoes throughout the length and breadth of the country, aye, the whole of the Buddhist world.

**Agga.** It augurs well that both of you appreciate our friendly exchange of views and I have no misgivings that something good will come of our meeting on this auspicious occasion. Sumana, I am very pleased to have an opportunity of discussing with you the question of questions. A problem, rationally approached, is on its fair way to proper solution. I trust that you will hear the message of Nibbana to the world. Brethren, the night has far advanced and it is time for us to retire. Good night to all.

# The Buddha Country or Universe

U HTAY HLAING,  
*Dhammacariya*

Originally published as the 'INTRODUCTION'  
to the 'The Message of Satipatthana, part V'  
By Nyaung Kan Aye Sayadaw, Ashin Indaka

Many days have passed since the Nyaungkan-Aye Sasanayeiktha Veyavicca Association (The Laity Group to support the Meditation Centre) requested me to write an introduction to this Fifth and Last part (Fifth Volume) of 'The Message of Satipatthana'.

I have already studied carefully the previous four volumes of the interesting books: The Message of Satipatthana, both in original Myanmar and English Translation and they are instructive and appealing. Now this Fifth Final Part is more instructive and appealing.

Why is this the most important of the whole series? Because since this is the final Volume, the Venerable Sayadaw has emphasized the good of all right thinking Buddhists, namely, the attainment of Nibbana in this very life. In order to achieve this noble, ultimate goal, the Venerable Thera has mapped out the timeless and universal Noble Path, the direct approach to the cessation of suffering which is the Magganga, the Eight-fold Noble Path in a very clear and concise manner. So every sentence, every word, containing full insightful sense or the taste of Dhamma. This being a practical introduction book, those who have already practised Satipatthana (Mindfulness) will instantly taste the Truth of Dhamma very strongly even in listening and reading activities. Even those who do not yet enter the noble training course will attain faith and energy with strong power. These Dhamma powers will certainly progress from strength to strength. I have no doubt above those achievements.

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## The Buddha Country or Universe

Indeed, in actual practice such noble faith (Saddha), energy (Viriya — effort) and other mental and spiritual powers are called meritorious deeds or wholesome things belonging to the realm of mind, that is, Mental Culture. The wise have proclaimed these mental, spiritual power to be the kings or emperors, known as Indriya, the Controlling Factors of Life. There are five Indriya, the five controlling Factors or Faculties, namely, Faith, Mindfulness, Energy (Effort), Concentration and Insight — Wisdom (Panna). Where these five emperors reign in the hearts of men, permanent peace, welfare, and happiness also appear. World peace or true peace lies here.

World history gives us Alexanders and Ceasars who made conquests and established great empires by force, such as Roman Empire French Empire, Russian Empire, British Empire and so on. At one time these conquests by force attained highest zenith of power and glory but there was no permanent peace and happiness even then. There were intractable conflicts, tensions and bloodshed in their time of power and glory. Therefore it is no wonder that empire after empire had failed and



collapsed in a short time of universal world history. During a few centuries, they disappear completely never to return. Such is the fate of rule by force for the empire-builders.

Now, turning to the Buddha Country or Buddha Empire it still lasts even after the passing of the 2500 years of history. It still shines in spiritual power and glory with renewed vigour. The omniscient Buddha, being completely pure and noble, rules over vast empire of devoted hearts. Mankind had lived and is still living under the power of Buddha Dhamma (the Noble Teaching of the Highest Truths of Life) so much so that peoples have contentments and peaceful lives. Therefore permanent and true peace lies in the insightful hearts every where. Truly under the banner of Buddha's Dhamma no danger arises. Under the Noble Teaching peace reigns. No fear or anxiety can disturb the minds of the devotees walking along the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore today less peoples of diverse faiths are taking interests in the wonderful phenomenon called the Buddha country or the Buddha world or the Buddha Universe.

One should remember that the emperor or the ruler of this Universe is not Buddha. Neither the great Disciples of the Buddha rule the Buddha country nor the powerful creator rule the world. No deity from Heaven has interest or determines.

The actual true rulers or empires are Sila (Right Moral Conduct or Restraint), Metta (Loving kindness), Sati (Mindfulness or Watchfulness) as taught in Satipatthana Sutta. These are the Constitution of the world. Universe, the establishment of mental and spiritual peace which is known as Buddha Country. This can be seen with mindfulness- wisdom eyes so much so that actually the Noble Country is more brilliant and more real than the lights of the sun and the moon. Our duty and responsibility is to practise Sila, Metta and Sati, the moral powers of limitless dimension. Let us be well established and strong at the basic foundation of life.

All persons irrespective of race, colour, religion and class, can take refuge in the Buddha Country. Everyone is welcomed to reside in this Noble State. No restrictions exist as the country's doors are always open to all. Unlike a political state no one needs to obtain pass fort and visa to travel another state. Such is the power and glory of the Buddha State,

Even in a zone or a quarter in this Noble State, peoples enjoy sats, metta, sati, the basic principles of noble life, the basic state constitution and the benefits are "due regards" for all as persons (reciprocity), unity, peace. Indeed self-regard and self-restraint (moral living) reign in this type of high thinking with mindfulness. This realm of life belongs even to the lowest class of people. This is the real Noble Empire.

The capital city of the Buddha state is Nibbana. Here, as right thinking people and Ariyas (Noble Persons) live, it is also known as the place, the residence of the Ariyas (Ariyavasa).

This capital city, unlike other worldly states' capitals, is free from every kind of troubles and every types of dangers. All sufferings cease. Freedom from fear is the essence. (Abhayanama sadisa). The unique phenomenon of this Noble City is that those who reach it never go to other states' capitals, other countries, however much they are developed and wealthy, No one takes another citizenship.

## The Smooth, Comfortable Train

As the Abhaya (Danger-Free) City has no complicated drivers route one has to take a single straight road. Thus there is only one way to the Noble Capital City (Ekayano ayam maggo.) No one can reach it by means of legs, by mere walking. One needs to board on a noble train and ride to the Abhaya City. The ordinary means of travel are useless (Gamanena napattabbo). There is a noble train to lead on to the destination. Wealth, status, power are not necessary.

This train has back-seats such a moral shame (Hiri), moral fear (Ottappa) and walls or protections by means of sati (mindfulness), giving all permanent security and safety and peace. This noble train is built with the excellent eight factors and although 84,000 people ride on it, not a sound of squeak or chuck occur. It is smooth comfortable and efficient from start to the finish because the body-frame is strongly built, (yatho akujano). The train has a well-build body.

When One rides on this Dhamma-train for the destiny of Abhaya City, one has to pass through sixteen railway stations, sixteen stages of progress. These stations, being pure and excellent, are free from all kinds of impurities, dirt, rubbish, garbage that one often meets in the ordinary railway stations of the world, the stations like cemeteries emitting foul smells. On the contrary the Dhamma-stations need no waiting, no longing for years and years. And with the arrival of the Dhamma City, death is conquered. (Amata=the Deathless Nibbana).

The Dhamma train, unlike the trains of the world, is always smooth, convenient and efficient. It is always comfortable in this type of train. The passing stations present unique scenes, excellent views that one previously does not experience. The sceneries and features are new experiences, new insights, new understandings only. Hence travellers want to progress step by step to each new state of visions and experiences. All now believe that this train should be taken first but actually they are late travellers. Being late, they feel repentance. Anyhow since they ride on the train they feel incomparable ease and comfort. Since the train is completely trouble—free, they proclaim that it is the first and the only train to ride.

## Fearful Interim Stations

Yet, some of the interim stations, junctions, etc., present something like ruined edifices, careless jungles, bone-like valleys in passing through them. So in some travellers' minds unhappiness disgust, laziness, boredom may occur. These states of mind are some types of reactions on the way.

So samsaric wanderers, travellers in the worldly circles of existences (Samsara) mostly decide to turn back, to break the journey. Most of them stop on the way, at least. The mostly feared station is called **Nibbinda** station, the inside of Disgust. At this point many want to return back and many do.

Therefore a traveller who passes through the three railway stations, (**bhaya-nibbinda-adinawa**) can certainly find excellent, noble sceneries and experiences further on, leading to the true peace and happiness. Especially in the eleventh station of **Sankhara Upekkha** there is complete freedom from love and hate, anxiety and longing because mere all things have neutral volitional activities only. It

means peace of equanimity, just like the Supreme God of Brahma-Heaven called the Maha Brahma, who has entered into the Fourth Jhana, the complete neutral peace. So a yogi—meditator now experiences the unprecedented Vipassana-Insight happiness for the first time.

Since this station presents equanimity of peaceful joy, many think that the destination has now arrived and they want to stop here, breaking the journey. They love it, they enjoy it so much so that they stay for a long time here. So this staying is known as "Parivatha", stay as a residence. But a vipassana traveller must know that if stoppage is long here, the train will surely drive backward to the back stations, because the engine becomes too cool and weak.

### The Entrance To the Final City

When the engine is given new power, new impetus and is driven forward it will proceed on to a new touch, just a new stop Royal City of Abhaya. To arrive at this town one generally needs forty days of travel if the engine runs regularly throughout.

This town, being the border place, is called **Gotrabhu** Station from which the train crosses the border line and enters the Ariya Noble Residential Gate. This is the Gateway to Ariya City.

If the train arrives at this town it will not move backward. It is the natural (Dhamma) Law to proceed further and enter the Noble City. Thus in natural manner the train enters the Abhaya City where Residence of Ariya Noble Persons exists. Here the traveller experiences the unprecedented, unconditioned peace known as Ultimate (Paramattha) Happiness, unknown and unexperienced through the wanderings in the rounds and rounds of existence (Samsara). Here the ultimate goal, the destination, is called unique or matchless Happiness.

### For Forty Days

For the blind ordinary worldlings, living in mental defilements, it is impossible to believe that the unequalled, unique Nibbanic Happiness or the Supreme, Complete Peace can be attained in just forty days. They will not believe it and they will not practise the way of Righteousness. Yet the attainment of the destiny to the Royal City where all sufferings and anxieties cease, can only be possible and practical within this Sasana (Buddha's Teaching) called the Eightfold Noble Path. No other Teachings, no other paths can arrive at the desired goal, the liberation or Escape from Dukkha—suffering. Only in this Sasana one can dwell in the royal residence (Ariya Mansion) because there exists the only true way for freedom, that is the Eightfold Noble Path. Outside the Buddha's Noble Teaching there is no true path to Liberation Freedom from Death.

This book, entitled "The Slogan or Message of Satipatthana" (Part Five), is the safe guide to reach the necessary Destination of life, the most wonderful, the most beautiful Deathlessness City which brings unique Peace and Freedom and Security. As this treatise is based on the essential Teachings of the Meditation Master, the late Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, it is the safest guide to realize the Supreme Nibbana.

### Think Deeply, Live Noble

Since most ordinary peoples, though they want Supreme Freedom, do not bear the burden of necessary duty and responsibility, they should, in truth, think deeply and live nobly. For example, one should not fear of hard-work of one's day suffering if one knows beforehand the attainment of one year's wealth or prosperity. He should cheerfully take one day's sufferings for a year's wealth and prosperity. This example is just a mundane, ordinary one. In fact, practice of Vipassana is not a worldly one day's suffering for mundane wealth, power and happiness. There is no useless hard-work in Vipassana practice. In the eyes of the ordinary, uninstructed persons, the practice of Noble mindfulness in daily life seem to be laborious, toilsome; burden some indeed. Yet this so-called dukkha-practice surely brings supramundane, transcendental peace and freedom and security. With daily correct work it certainly reaches the goal of Nibbana. So it is not Dukkha (suffering) to practise the Eightfold Noble path. People should not cast doubts on this fact,

Therefore by undergoing just about forty days' Vipassana Meditation Practice, a meditator will certainly end the samsaric (greatest) sorrows and sufferings - the past and future series of births and deaths. When this practice matures, it surely ends all Dukkha, past, present, future. This testimony and bold guarantees are given by the Omniscient Buddhas and His Disciples up to the present time. Such a hold, unheard. of declaration is now verified by the present wise masters of this Method. Hence every person, irrespective of religion, race, colour, language, class etc. should take part and try the Satipatthana Methods. There is no other work more powerful or more necessary in life.

In fact it is the most satisfactory boon of greatest gift one can attain in this present existence. Everyone will find this greatest happiness.

But this greatest and rarest opportunity is not always available because we all do not own tomorrow. Therefore a well-wisher must practise this Vipassana today, without fail, without any excuses.

# VIPASSANA NANAS

## ဝိပဿနာဉာဏ်စဉ်(၁၀)ပါး

Nana or insight which realizes this nature of mind and matter is called **Namarupa-pariccheda-Nana**. It is also called Ditthi-Visuddhi.

The cause of mind and matter is no other than mind and matter. It was true in the past, it is true in the present and it will be true in the future. Nana or insight which realizes this fact is called **Paccayapariggahanana**. It is also called Kankhavitara Visuddhi.

1

### Sammasana-nana

(၁) ဆဗ္ဗသနဉာဏ် = အဓိကအားဖြင့် မိမိ၏ ခန္ဓာငါးပါး စွပ်နှာမ် သင်္ခါရ တရားတို့ကို အနိစ္စ၊ ရုက္ခ၊ ဗေဒနတ္ထ လက္ခဏာယာဉ် သုံးပါးသို့တင်၍ သုံးသပ်ဆင်ခြင်တတ်သောဉာဏ်။

After seeing Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta nature of mind and matter, Nana or insight jumps to the conclusion that Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta nature must be inherent in mind and matter in the past and future also. This Nana or insight is called Sammasananana.

On proceeding further with the contemplation, it will be observed that all *rupa and nama* arise and pass away at every moment of contemplation. For this reason the phenomenal nature of their impermanence will be known and appreciated. This is "*Anicca-sammasana-nana*" (Insight into the impermanent nature of phenomena).

It will also be observed and perceived that the natural phenomena of *rupa and nama* are constantly taking place and that this arising and passing away of matter and mind have incessantly caused sufferings, and therefore, they are neither pleasant nor reliable, and are terribly miserable and distressing. This is "*Dukkha-sammasana-nana*" (Insight into ill-condition).

Realizing the fact that these conditioned things are happening on their own volition and that their phenomenal occurrences do not follow the dictates of one's own will, they are observed and perceived as neither "*atta*" nor "Self" but merely "*anatta*" (Not-self). This is "*Anatta-sammasana-nana*" (Insight into non-atta or non- self).

After having made an analytical observation and reflection on these facts with entire satisfaction, the disciple proceed with his contemplation as usual without further reflection. At this stage, he will clearly perceive the beginning of the arising of towards the sense-object at every moment of his contemplation. He will also perceive the coming to an end of this sensation which is completely severed. At this Juncture, there may arise many other strange happenings, such as

### Udayabbhaya-nana

(၂) ဥပဿယ ဉာဏ် = ခန္ဓာ ငါးပါး ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရုတရားတို့၏ ဆိုင်ရာ အကြောင်းကြောင့် ရုတ်တရက် ဖြစ်ပေါ်လာပုံနှင့် မကြာခင်မှာပင် ချုပ်ပျောက် ပျက်စီးသွားကြပုံကို ရှုဆင်ခြင်သောဉာဏ်၊ အဖြစ်အပျက်ကို ရှုသော ဉာဏ်တည်း။

Nana or insight that perceives the beginning and end of an Arammana is called Udayabbayanana. It is also called Maggamaggananadassana-Visuddhi.

1. mental visions of brilliant or bright light
2. arising of rapturous feelings,
3. arising of feelings of calmness,
4. strong devotional feelings relating to Buddha and Dhamma
5. great enthusiasm to carry out the practice of meditation
6. joyful feelings
7. extremely rapid, clear and purified perception of sense-objects
8. the capability of practising mindfulness without missing to note any sensation that needs be contemplated.
9. the capability to contemplate automatically without making particular effort.
10. feeling of subtle pleasure in the contemplation

The *yogi* (disciple) is so much encouraged and elated that he cannot remain mute and cannot help recounting his experiences. This is just an initial or immature stage of "Udayabbhaya-nana" and a misconceptions of "magganana"

After having come to this decision if the contemplation is carried on in continuity, those feelings of contentment and satisfaction and mental visions of light will gradually decrease, and the perception of the objects will become clearer and clearer with awareness. The gradual arising and dissolution of numerous phenomena with all their movements taking place at a snail pace, will be clearly perceived fragment by fragment, in the course of a single act of bending or stretching the arm or the leg or of taking a step, before it even reaches from one stage of a series of movement to another, that is, without reaching the end of a chain in the consecutive movements of the limb from one position to another. This knowledge is the mature form of "Udayabbhayanana", flawlessly free from 'Upakkilesa'. (impurities).

### Bhanga-nana

(၃) အင်္ဂဉာဏ် = ခန္ဓာငါးပါး ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရုတရားတို့၏ အဖြစ်အပျက်ကို ချုပ်သော ရှုမြင်သောဉာဏ်။

After being aware of the disappearance of an Arammana second mind is aware of the disappearance of the 1st mind. Nana or insight that is aware of these two steps is

called Bhanga Nana

When this 'nana' has gained more strength, the perception of the phenomenal sense-objects becomes accelerated. Therefore, the end-vanishing of the sense feelings is more clearly manifested and becomes more noticeable than the beginning of their arising. Then, all sense-objects would appear as if they have already vanished. Forms and shapes of hand, leg, head, body, etc., are no longer perceived and are found to be fading away followed by dissolution every time contemplation is made. It is also perceived with awareness that even the contemplating mind along with its objects of contemplation vanishes one after the other immediately in succession. This knowledge and awareness of the process of vanishing in pairs of the sense-object and the knowing mind at every moment of contemplation is called "Bhanga-nana" (Insight into the dissolution of things).

4

### Baya-nana

(၄) တယဉာဏ် = ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရတရားတို့၏ အပျက်ဟိုချည်း တွေ့မြင်နေရသဖြင့် ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရတရားတို့ကို ကြောက်ဖွယ်လိလိ ဘေးကြီးအတိဟု ထင်မြင်သောဉာဏ်။

Having perceived that both the knowing mind and the phenomenal sense-objects are constantly passing away, in the past, present and future, there arises the knowledge that they are really frightful. This knowledge is, however, viewed with pleasure. This is "Baya-nana" (Awareness of frightful condition)

5

### Adinava-nana

(၅) အာဒိနာဉာဏ် = ကြောက်ဖွယ်လိလိ ဘေးအထိ ရှုမြင်ရသဖြင့် ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရတရားတို့၌ အပြစ်ဟု ထင်မြင်သောဉာဏ်။

Then there arises the realization of the fact that these psycho-physical phenomena so rapidly dissolving are undesirable being faulty and defective in nature. This is "Adinava-nana" (Insight into unsatisfactory condition)

6

### Nibbida-nana

(၆) နိဗ္ဗိဒါဉာဏ် = အပြစ်ဟု ထင်မြင်နေရသော ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရတရားတို့အပေါ်၌ မတွယ်တာ မပျော်ရွှင်နိုင်တော့ဘဲ ပြီးငွေ့သောဉာဏ်။

On proceeding with the contemplation, awareness of the unattractive and boring nature of things takes place. This is 'Nibbida-nana" (Insight into wearisome condition, a Nana that becomes totally disinterested in mind and matter.)

7

### Muncitukamyata-nana

(၇) မုတ္တိတုကမ္ပတညဏ်=သင်္ခါရ တရားတို့ အပေါ်၌ ငြီးငွေ့လာ၍ ထို  
ခန္ဓာငါးပါး သင်္ခါရတရားတို့မှ လွတ်မြောက်  
လိုသောဉာဏ်။

Then, knowledge or awareness also occurs looking forward to escape from the misery and sufferings brought about by those phenomena of arising and passing away of *rupas* and *namas*, and thinking at the same time that it would be better if these physical and mental phenomena cease to exist altogether. This knowledge is "*Muccitukamyata-nana*" (Knowledge or insight arising from desire to escape).

8

**Patisankha-nana**

(၈) ပဋိသင်္ခါဉာဏ် =လွတ်မြောက်ရန် ကကြောင်း၏ ပြည့်စုံခြင်းငှါ  
ခန္ဓာငါးပါး ရုပ်နာမ်သင်္ခါရ တရားတို့၌ အနိစ္စ  
ပုဂ္ဂိုလ် အနတ္တဟု ထင်မိ၍ ရှုမှတ်ဆင်ခြင်သောဉာဏ်။

At this stage as contemplation is carried on with most anxiousness for an escape (deliverance), a clear perception of '*anicca*', '*dukkha*' and '*anatta*' would arise. In particular, the nature of *dukkha*, sufferings, may be perceived very convincingly. This is '*Patisankha nana*' (Insight arising out of further contemplation; Nana or insight that regains the awareness of Anicca or Dukkha or Anatta nature of mind and matter).

9

**Sankharupekkha-nana**

(၉) သင်္ခါရပေက္ခာဉာဏ်=ခန္ဓာ ငါးပါး ရုပ် နာမ် သင်္ခါရ တရားတို့၌  
ကြောက်ခြင်း၊ နှစ်သက်ခြင်းကို မဖြစ်စေဘဲ  
လျစ်လျူရှုနိုင်သောဉာဏ်။

When this '*Patisankha-nana*' is fully strengthened, contemplation and awareness become automatic and proceed on its own like the machine of a clock. It proceeds contemplating on objects with equanimity, i.e., superficially taking notice of them, and avoiding to pursue the arising of good or bad sensations. It is so very delicate and gentle. Such contemplation may go on automatically with awareness as it gains momentum for one hour, two hours or three hours. Even though it may last so long, there will be no tiredness or exhaustion. The realization of the true nature of the objects of contemplation without exertion and without pursuing good or bad sensations in the course of the contemplation which lasts for a long time is "*Sankha-rupekkha-nana*" (Knowledge or insight arising from viewing things with equanimity; Nana or insight, that is indifferent to Arammana).

10

**Anuloma-nana**

(၁၀) အနုလောမဉာဏ်=အောက်အောက်သော ဝိပဿနာဉာဏ်များနှင့်  
အထက် မင်္ဂလာ၌ ရလတ္တံ့သော မောမိပက္ခိယ  
တရားအားလျော်သော ဉာဏ်တို့ဖြစ်သည်။(ဘေဓ)



While such realization is going on automatically, extremely fast and active knowledge reappears and his knowledge which advances with a big rush towards a noble path known as "*Vutthana-magga*" is called "*Vutthana-gamini vipassana-nana*" (Insight leading to elevation).

That special knowledge appears with the realization that physical and mental phenomena which occur at the six sense-doors momentarily are impermanent, suffering and not-self (*anatta*). The knowledge that arises at the last moment is "*Anuloma-nana*" (Knowledge of adaptation) which consists of three '*javanas*', impulse moments, called '*Parikamma*' (preparation), '*Upacara*' (approach) and '*Anuloma*' (adaptation). Anulomanana transforms mind to become qualified to enter the threshold of Nibbana. This is the "*Nana*" that is gained in consonance or in harmony with the preceding eight "*Vipassana-nana*" and subsequent '*Magga-nana*' (Knowledge of the Path)

After '*Anulomanana*' there arises "*Gotrabhu-nana*" (Knowledge overmastering kinship) which grasps the sensation towards Nibbana where the miseries and sufferings connected with *rupa* and *nama* entirely cease. Gotrobhunana pushes mind across the threshold. As soon as mind crosses the threshold, it becomes aware of Nibbana. This is the knowledge which severs the lineage of '*Putthujjanas*' (worldlings) and enters the lineage of the '*Ariyas*' (Noble Ones)

Then, there arise "*sotapatti Magga and Phala Nana*" (Insight wisdom arising from the Noble Path of Stream-winning and its Fruition) which realises Nibbana. The '*Magganana*' is called "*Nana-dassana-visuddhi*" (Purity of insight)

The moment of arising of the '*magga and Phala Nana*' does not last even for a second. Then retrospective reflection of the peculiar experiences of the "*Magga, Phala and Nibbana*" takes place. This is '*Paccavakkhana-nana*' (Insight of retrospection).

One who has acquired knowledge up to the stage of '*pacavakkhana-nana*' seriatim to the procedure outlined above, is a "*Sotapanna*" (Stream-Winner).

## References

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